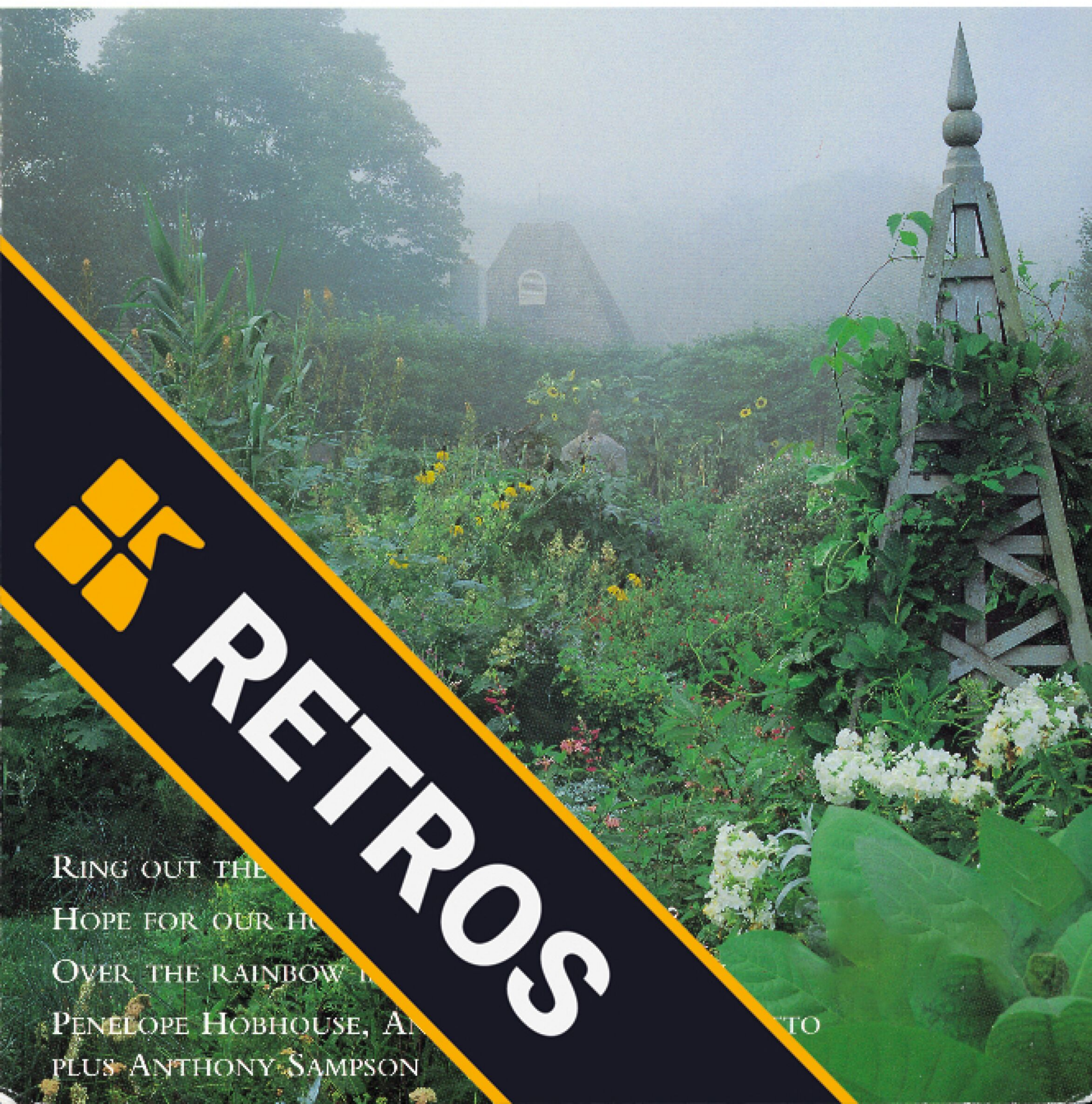


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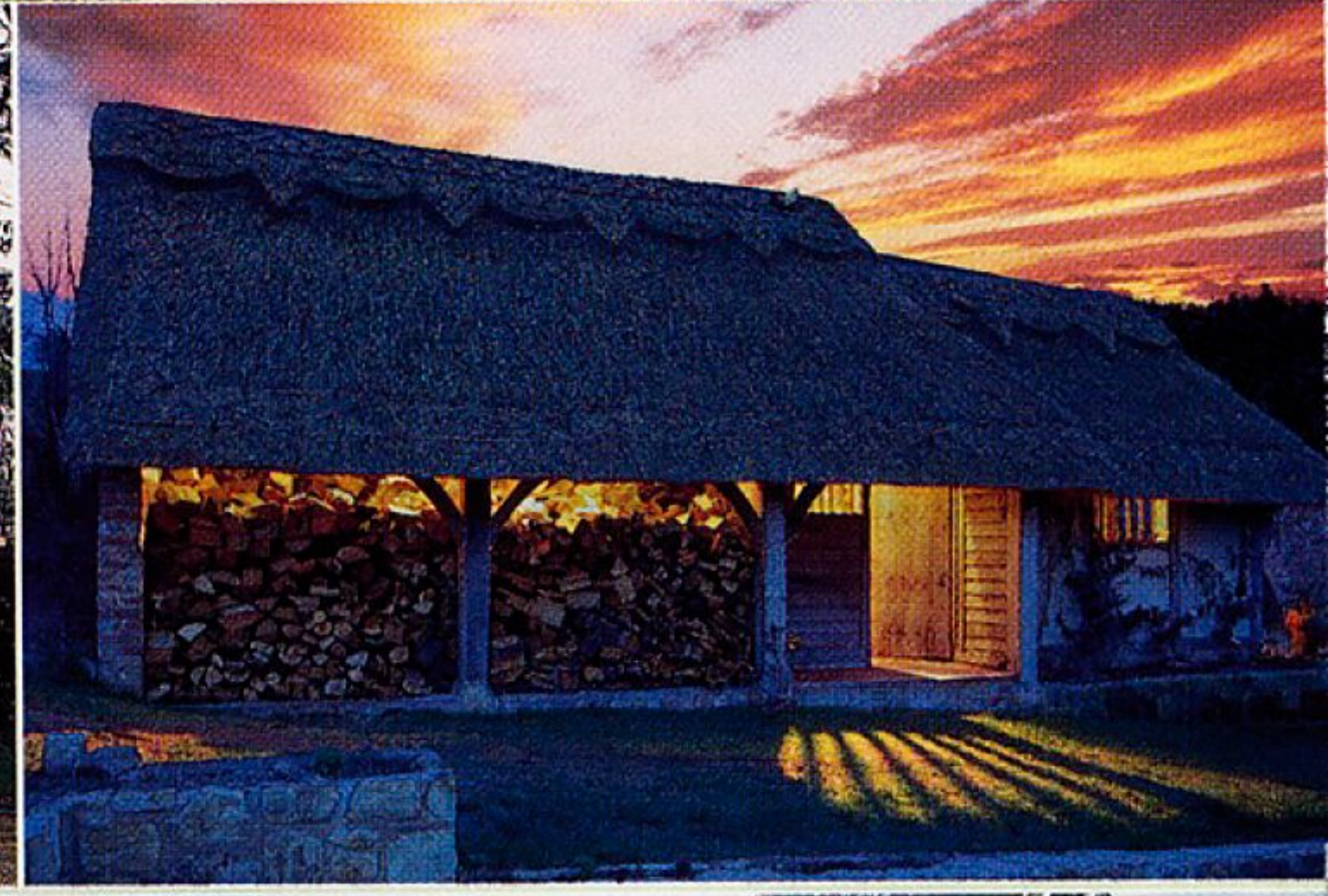


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IMPROVING YOUR LIFESTYLE

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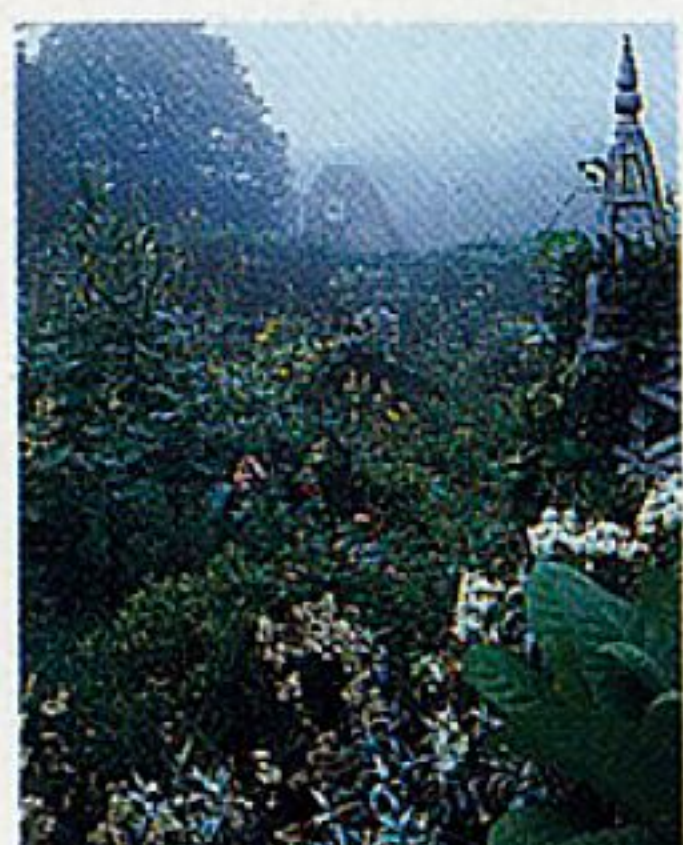
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Rainbows in the mist,
Stonecrop USA
Cover photograph by
Mick Hales.

Editor: Rosie Atkins **Associate Editors:** Penelope Hobhouse, Anna Pavord **Assistant Editor:** Sue Elderkin **Managing Editor:** Fiona Jerome
Art Director: Claudia Zeff **Design:** the Senate **Production Director:** Vic Lime **Production Manager:** Sophie Leuty
Ad Director: Andrew Hirsch **Ad Manager:** Susan Bourne **Classified Ads:** Sara Deal **Publisher:** John Brown **Publisher's Assistant:** Emma Gage
Gardens Illustrated is published 6 times a year, price £2.95,
by John Brown Publishing Ltd, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, London SW6 6LU Tel 071 381 6007 Fax 071 381 3930.
Advertising: Display advertising enquiries contact Susan Bourne on 071 381 6007 or by fax on 071 381 6903.
Classified advertising contact Sara Deal on the same numbers.

Subscriptions: *Gardens Illustrated*, FREEPOST SW6096, Frome, Somerset BA11 1YA, UK Rates: Full UK rate £17.70 per annum (6 issues); Overseas £30/\$50 All payments in pounds sterling or US dollars. Cheques/PO's payable to John Brown Publishing Ltd.
Visa/Access/Mastercard/Eurocard/Amex/Diner's Club call (freephone) 0800 581 409 See page 126 for details.

Printing: Cooper Clegg Ltd **Repro:** Minerva Ltd **Distribution:** COMAG, Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex YB7 7QE **US distribution:** Eastern News Distributors Inc, 2020 Superior Street, Sandusky, OH 44870, USA. Tel 800 221 3148. Unsolicited manuscripts, artwork or transparencies are accepted on the understanding that the publishers incur no liability for their storage or return. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and may not be reproduced without permission. All prices are correct at time of going to press.

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Letter from the Editor

Welcome to **Gardens Illustrated**. In an age when gardening seems to offer attractive alternatives to the harsh uncertainties of life, we are delighted to present a new gardening magazine which we hope you will find stimulating and thought-provoking. Our survey of Gardening in the Nineties reveals we could not have chosen a better time to launch. **Claudia Zeff**, the Art Director and I have been extraordinarily lucky to have had the opportunity to create a magazine which fulfils both the publisher, **John Brown's**, vision and our passion for gardens. We are indebted to our enthusiastic Associate Editors, **Penelope Hobhouse** and **Anna Pavord**. With their valuable advice and an expert team of writers, photographers and illustrators, we think we have started a magazine that will broaden horticultural horizons and eventually, become a measure of garden appreciation, bringing together gardeners from all over the world.



ROSIE ATKINS



CLAUDIA ZEFF

Gardens Illustrated will be published every two months. The June/July issue will be available from all good newsagents from May 27. By becoming a subscriber, you automatically become eligible to take up our **Gardens Illustrated** 'Invitations' to special events. In this issue we invite you to join us at the new RHS garden at Hyde Hall in Essex, on Saturday April 24.

Our next issue has a similar emphasis on inspirational people, plants and intriguing gardens, both here and abroad. We plan to have a lively letters page and we would be delighted to hear your opinions, ideas and observations. You can also expect a warm reception at the **Gardens Illustrated** stand (210c) at The International Spring Gardening Fair, at Wembley this Easter (April 8-12) where there is a chance to win a fabulous 'Hobhouse Pot' made by Philip Thomason.

I hope to see you there. Good gardening.

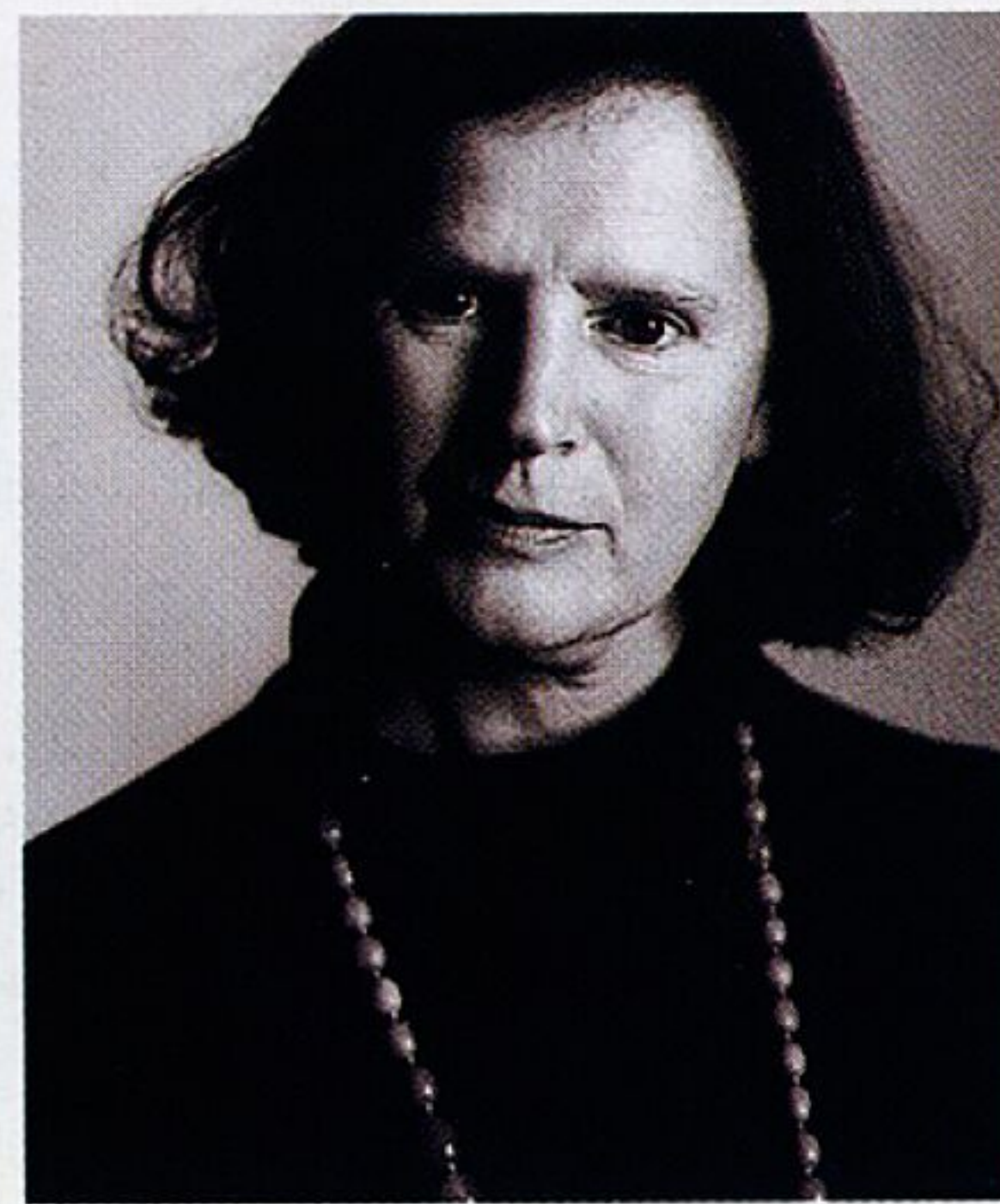
Rosie Atkins.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

PENELOPE HOBHOUSE was born in Ulster, graduated in Economics from Girton College, Cambridge, and has become a world-renowned gardening writer, and designer. For nearly 14 years she and her late husband, Professor John Malins, were in charge of the National Trust Garden at Tintinhull House in Somerset.



She was the series editor to the National Trust Gardening Guides and is author of ten gardening titles, including *Plants in Garden History*, recently published by Pavilion. For the launch issue of **Gardens Illustrated**, Penelope Hobhouse went to New York State to meet a young English gardener who has put her stamp on the particularly fine garden at Stonecrop.



ANNA PAVORD

Before working on *The Observer*, Anna was a director on BBC's 'Line-up' programme. She has written the Saturday gardening column in *The Independent* since the paper was launched in October 1986. She also wrote and presented *Flowering Passions*

on Channel Four Television. Her books include *Foliage* for the National Trust, and *The Flowering Year* and *Gardening Companion* both published by Chatto and Windus. This spring sees the publication of her extended National Trust guide to Hidcote. For this issue of **Gardens Illustrated** Anna Pavord looks into how EC grants will affect the future of our historic gardens.

Blakes



There is only one Blakes

Gardener's Notebook

NEWS, VIEWS AND INNOVATIONS



Salvias and swans

The gardens at Abbotsbury, in Dorset are often described as sub-tropical but the micro climate of this coastal garden is probably best described as 'moist Mediterranean'. Apart from the palms and lush tree ferns, the gardens are also home to the National Collections of eucalyptus and salvia. This year Abbotsbury's ancient swannery, the largest colony of mute swans in the world, celebrates its 600th anniversary. There will be a multitude of events from pageants to plants sales. The new visitor centre and redesigned plant sales area should cope admirably with the expected increase in visitors. Abbotsbury Gardens, Abbotsbury, Dorset open daily 10-5 until October. Admission £2.90, concession for OAPs, children free. Joint tickets for the garden and swannery available, but check before you go as the swannery is not always open. Tel 0305 8713872.

Peony update

May is a good time to see the collection of tree peonies at Kelways historic nursery. Many of the plants flowering in the garden were bred by the pioneer nurseryman, William Kelway, earlier this century. Tree peony, *Paeonia delavayi*, can reach 6 feet in height, making it unsuitable for small gardens, but if you have space the elegant cut foliage and dropping cup-shaped flowers make a fine show in summer. Kelways have always attracted crowds in June when Peony Valley is looking its most spectacular. This year the nursery is replanting the valley, but what remains can be seen free of charge. The pink peony 'Duchess of Marlborough' is much sought after, as is 'Mrs William Kelway', with its huge white blooms. The new and well-stocked plant centre is open daily. Kelways Nurseries, Langport, Somerset TA10 9EZ. Tel 0458 250521.

Dorney in bloom

Dorney Court, one of the finest Tudor manor house in England, has been lived in by the same family for 400 years. It was here that the first pineapple in England was grown and the fruit presented to the ill-fated King Charles II in 1661. In March, Bressingham opened their new plant centre at this historic house. They will be offering many of the plants seen in Dorney Court's colourful borders, recently replanted by Blooms of Bressingham. Dorney Court, Dorney, Windsor, is open Easter weekend, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays in May, from 2-5. To check opening times of the house, tel 0628 604638. The Bressingham Plant Centre is open daily from 10-5. Tel 0628 669999.

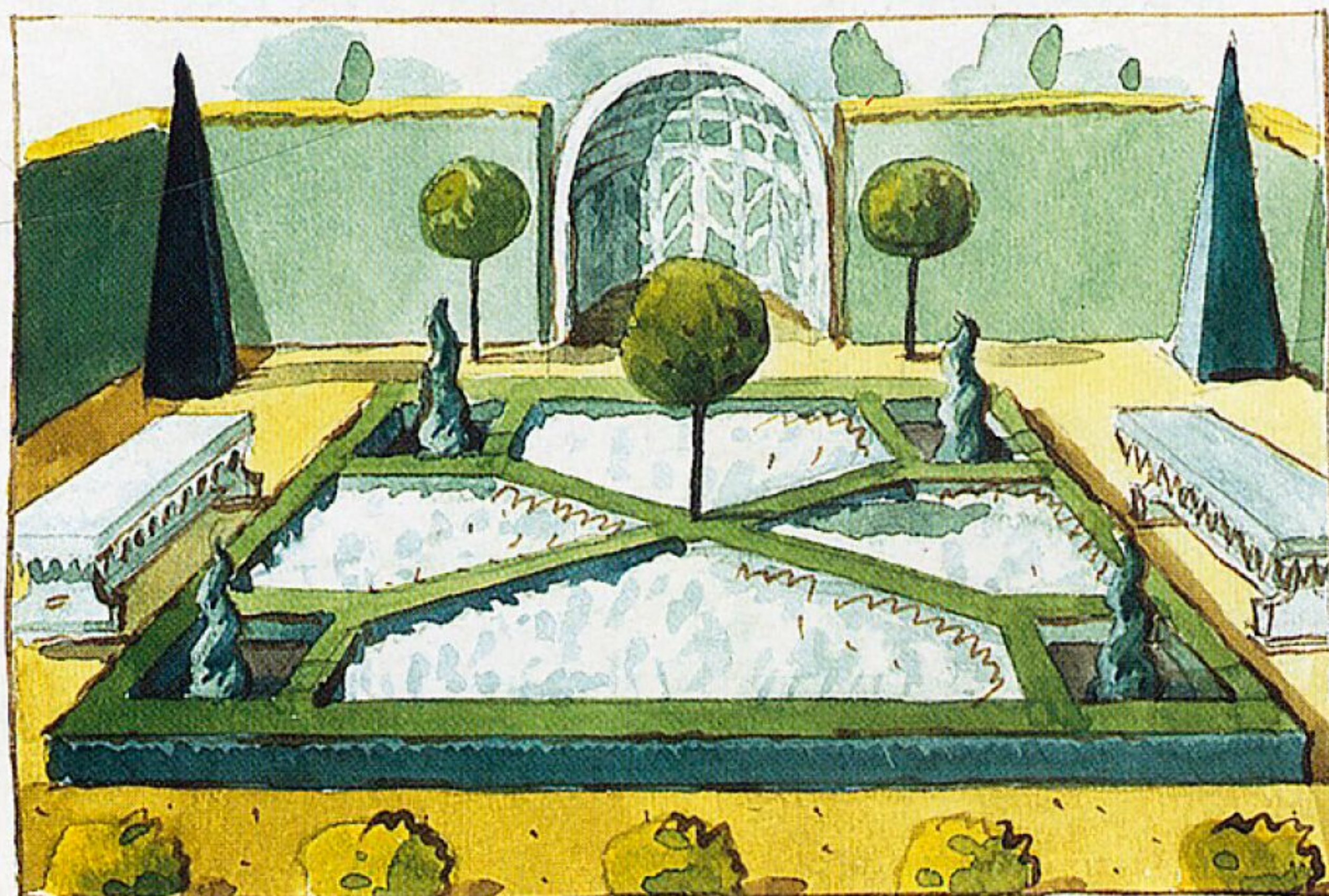




Knot kit

Garden designer George Carter has combined his creative talents with The Romantic Garden Nursery; the result is a series of plant kits, tailor-made for gardeners who

have not known where to start when planning an Elizabethan knot garden, a 17th-century potager, a *parterre de broderie* or even a maze. The simplest design is the ten foot square knot garden, edged in box, costing £250 plus VAT and delivery. This includes 125 box plants, 150mm high, plus the plan and instructions on how to lay out the design. The knot, *parterre* and potager kits can be further embellished with box cones, £19.99, or wildly-extravagant box spirals at £124. For details contact The Romantic Garden Nursery, Swannington, Norwich, Norfolk NR9 5NR. Tel 0603 261488.



Parterre day

For those who would like to know more about *parterres*, Caroline Holmes, the garden historian, is running a one-day seminar on the subject at Hintlesham Hall, Ipswich, Suffolk on Thursday April 22, 9.30-4. The cost, including lunch, is £40. For further details contact Caroline Holmes, Denham End Farm, Denham, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP29 5EE. Tel 0284 810653.

Mending the break

If precious terracotta pots have suffered from frost damage this winter or toppled and cracked in the wind, don't despair. Milliput, known worldwide for doing wonders with resins, saw an article explaining how to repair pots by grinding bits of broken terracotta into a powder and then mixing it with putty to make an invisible mend. Thinking this a little labour intensive, they have come up with a much better solution which is easy to use and comes in various colours, including standard terracotta. Terracotta Milliput costs £2.50 (inc p&p) available from The Milliput Company, Unit 5, The Marian, Dolgellau, Gwynedd LL40 1UU. Tel 0341 422562.

Barrow power

If, back aching after a long day's pushing, you have ever wondered why a motorised wheelbarrow hasn't been invented, you will be pleased to hear it has. The Moto-barrow, named Jeeves, made its debut on BBC's *Tomorrow's World* and since it has been in production it has found particular favour with elderly gardeners who have a problem balancing a full load in a conventional one-wheeled barrow. According to the manufacturers, Jeeves goes quietly about his business, powered by a 12-volt rechargeable car battery, costing around £15. The speed varies from a 'snail's pace' to about 4mph. The barrow can also be converted to carry heavy items, such as large flowerpots, around the garden. The price of the Jeeves Moto-barrow is £299, plus £2.90 p&p. For details contact Pick Products, Elliot Road, March, Cambridge PE15 8QU. Tel 0354 660077.



Feline traps

The recession brings relief to gardeners plagued by cats taking liberties in their flowerbeds. Vince May, an avionics engineer, turned his mind to inventing an electronic cat deterrent during a lull in the demand for avionics equipment. The result is an alarm you can fix in a window box or hide in the herbaceous borders. The high-frequency noise emitted by the little green and yellow box is inaudible to human ears but it has the desired effect on marauding cats. The demand for these devices, which cost £39.95, has been overwhelming and there is now a waiting list. For further details contact Skyforce Cleanup, 28/30 Margate Road, Ramsgate CT11 7SG. Tel 08843 588298.



Gardener's Notebook

NEWS, VIEWS AND INNOVATIONS



Cline Nichols

Impact with ivy

These attractive, ivy-clad topiary figures will brighten the gloomiest basement or balcony. Barbara Fordyce has joined forces with Elizabeth MacLeod Matthews, at Chenies Manor, to produce topiary birds, butterflies, spheres and balls, grown in terracotta pots. The birds cost around £30, the spheres and balls from £15-£20. Keeping the figures in shape requires very little gardening skills. "Just clip stray shoots back to the frame when it looks a little untidy," says Barbara. Link a buying trip with a visit to Chenies Manor, Chenies, nr Amersham, Buckinghamshire. The gardens are open on Wednesday and Thursdays, April to October, from 3-5. Tel 049476 2888. For details of topiary tel 0923 282385.

Healing garden

A new garden of world medicine has been created at The Chelsea Physic Garden. Beds contain medicinal plants used by Maoris and Aborigines, as well as plants used in India, South Africa, North America, China and the Mediterranean. The curator, Sue Minter, is author of *The Healing Garden* (published in May by Headline Press, £17.99). The Chelsea Physic Garden opens its doors to the public 2-5 every Sunday and Wednesday, from April 4. Admission £2.50. There is also a new plant sales area. Tel 071 352 5646.

Pruning service

It appears the pruning of roses, wisteria and vines can all cause concern to gardeners all over the country, but help is at hand from John and Teresa Scarman, who run the famous rose nursery, *Roses du Temps Passé*. They have been offering a local pruning service for some time, but this year they are prepared to travel further afield. The service would be of particular benefit to those with gardens containing old roses and rare plants. The couple favour a formal approach to pruning, influenced by the French tradition. From March to November they offer advice on summer pruning and will also help with design and colour combinations. In order to reduce expenses they target one county at a time and charge local rates during that period. The cost is £20 an hour. For further information contact Cottage Garden Roses, Woodlands House, Stretton, nr Stafford ST19 9LG. Tel 0785 840217.

Premier plants

The new edition of Hillier Premier Plant catalogue contains around 700 plants which you would be lucky to find in the average garden centre. Having made your choice from the brochure, identify your nearest stockist from a network of 88 stockists around the UK. Phone through your order and they will let you know when your plants are ready for collection. (A revised catalogue is sent out automatically if you have placed an order within six months). Among the treasures on offer is *Abeliophyllum distichum* (£15.45, see right), a small shrub with fragrant white flowers produced on bare stems in February, the rare *Cercis siliquastrum* 'Alba' (£25), a white-flowered Judas Tree, and perhaps the most beautiful hebe in cultivation, *Hebe hulkeana* (£9.95). Hillier Premier Plant Catalogue (£1) available from Hillier Nurseries Ltd, Ampfield House, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 9PA. Tel 0794 68733.



Thoroughbred



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confidence in any Mountfield that you choose.

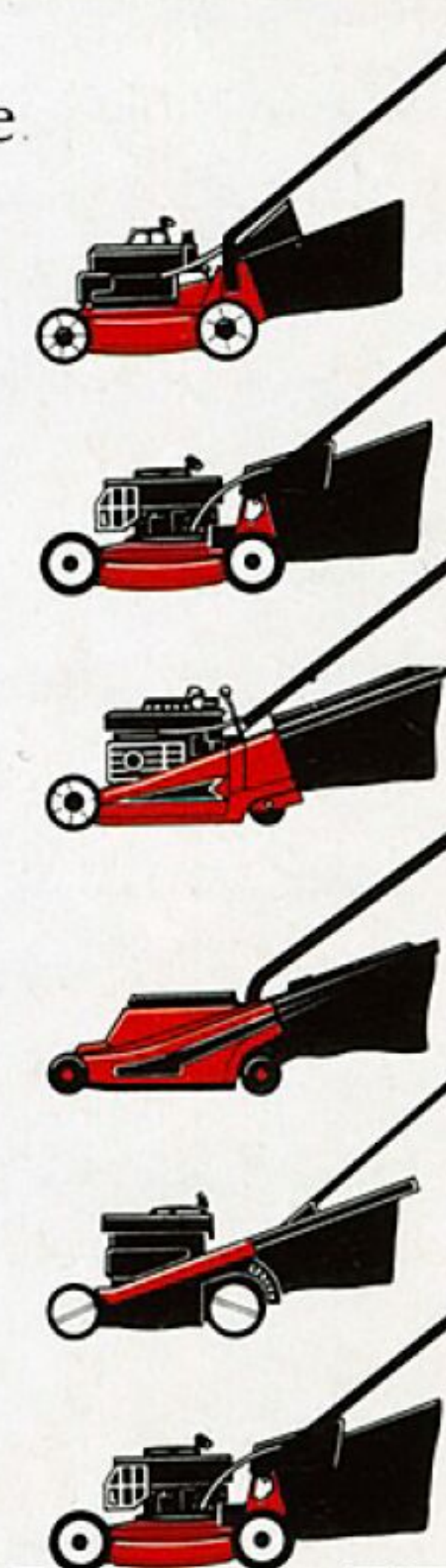
And there are plenty to choose from.

Mountfield mowers come with electric or petrol powered engines. Wheels or a roller. And the options of self-propulsion and ignition key start.

So the only question that faces you,

we suggest, is not which mower but simply -

which Mountfield?



Mountfield

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Timely Visits

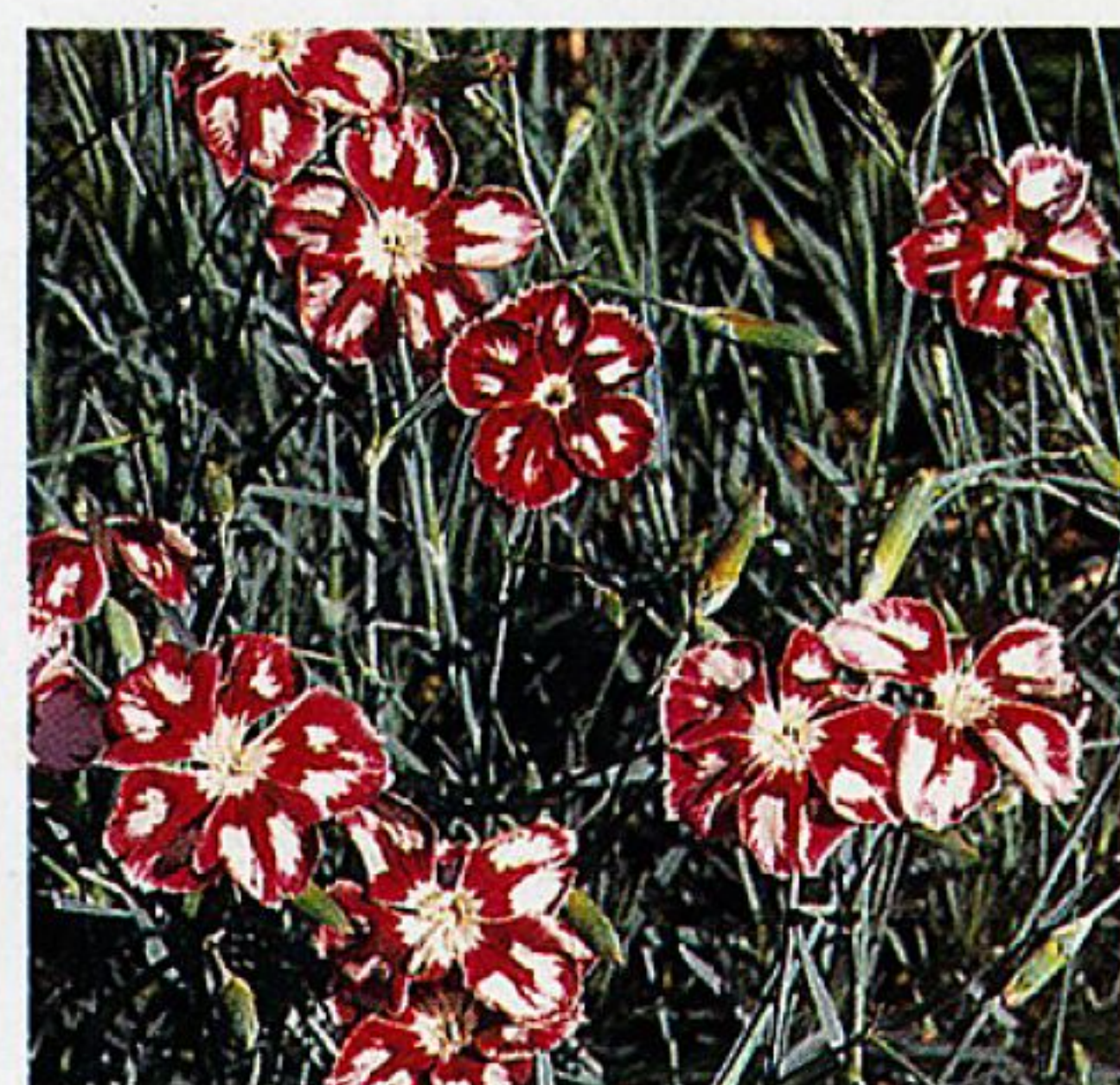
GARDENS AND NURSERIES TO VISIT IN APRIL AND MAY

Patrick Taylor focuses on some of the nation's gardens, arboreta and nurseries offering the finest plants and looking their best at this time of year.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE BURNWODE PLANTS

Wotton Rd, Ludgershall, nr
Aylesbury HP18 9NZ 1m SE of
Ludgershall on Wotton Rd,
11m W of Aylesbury by A41.
Tel: 0844 237415
Open: Mar to Oct, Wed to
Sun and Bank Hol 10-6

Derek and Judy Tolman run one of the most seductive nurseries within easy striking distance of London. The great strength of their stock is the herbaceous department, with a particularly dazzling collection of named varieties of garden pinks; now is a good time to buy them. They also have rare cultivars of the scented violet and other good violas, many primulas, named varieties of oriental poppy and excellent cranesbills. They produce an exceptionally informative catalogue (£1 in stamps or cash). Their own garden, The Thatched Cottage, Duck Lane, Ludgershall, is open by appointment only.



CORNWALL CAERHAYS CASTLE

Nr Gorran FA1 7DE 10m S of
St Austell by minor roads.
Tel: 0872 501310
Open: 22 Mar to 7 May,
Mon to Fri 11-4, also Suns
28 Mar and 11 Apr and 10
May Bank Hol 2-5. 100 acres

This great garden opens *only* in the spring and is of such exceptional quality that it would be well worth planning a trip to south Cornwall specially to see it. The Williamses, who still live here, were pioneer plant collectors whose introductions of the great Asiatic shrubs (*Camellia x williamsii*, *Rhododendron williamsianum*, etc) found an exceptionally happy home on the Cornish coast. They are planted in irresistible jungle-like profusion on the slopes that rise behind John Nash's fanciful castle. The family also owns the outstanding Burncoose & South Down Nurseries at Gwennap, near Redruth.



CUMBRIA MUNCASTER CASTLE

Cumbria Ravenglass
CA18 1RQ
1m SE of Ravenglass
by A595
Tel: 0229 717614
Open: Daily 11-5
77 acres

Few gardens have a more spectacular site and fewer still have the bold planting and design that unites house and site so satisfyingly. A long, twisting drive leads up to the castle – lined with spectacular old rhododendrons, some of which came from Kingdon-Ward's 1992 expedition. The castle commands unforgettable views of the Esk valley and the hills beyond; leading away from it to one side an immense turf terrace, made to view the landscape, follows the contours of the hillside whose upper banks are clothed in ornamental trees and shrubs, with wonderful maples, cherries and magnolias.



GLOUCESTERSHIRE WESTONBIRT ARBORETUM

Westonbirt, near Tetbury
GL8 8QS
Tel. 0666 88220
Open: Daily 10-8
or sunset if earlier
600 acres

The mention of the word 'arboretum' causes the eyes of some gardeners to glaze with boredom. But Westonbirt, in the care of the Forestry Commission, is one of the finest gardening treats imaginable. It is beautiful on any day of the year, but in the spring the new foliage of the deciduous trees and shrubs gives special pleasure. Here, among countless other things, is the best collection of Japanese maples in the country. Some of the shrubs, too, are outstanding in the next month or two – do not miss the exquisite *Rhododendron quinquefolia*, enkianthus, fothergilla and viburnums.



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Sports Centre)

Friday 23rd April to Sunday 25th April 1993
9 am to 5 pm

*Planting-up demonstrations Sat 24th and
Sun 25th April at 11 am and 2.00 pm.
Light refreshments in the Long Gallery.*

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Elton Hall,
Elton, Nr Peterborough
(Situated on A605 – 6 miles west of
Peterborough)

Saturday 1st May to Monday 3rd May 1993
9 am to 5 pm

*Planting-up demonstrations Sat 1st May, Sun 2nd
May and Mon 3rd May at 11 am and 2.00 pm.
House and tea rooms open Sunday and Monday
afternoons.*

SURREY

Chilworth Manor,
Chilworth, Nr Guildford

Friday 14th May to Sunday 16th May 1993
9 am to 6 pm

Gardens and tea room open each day

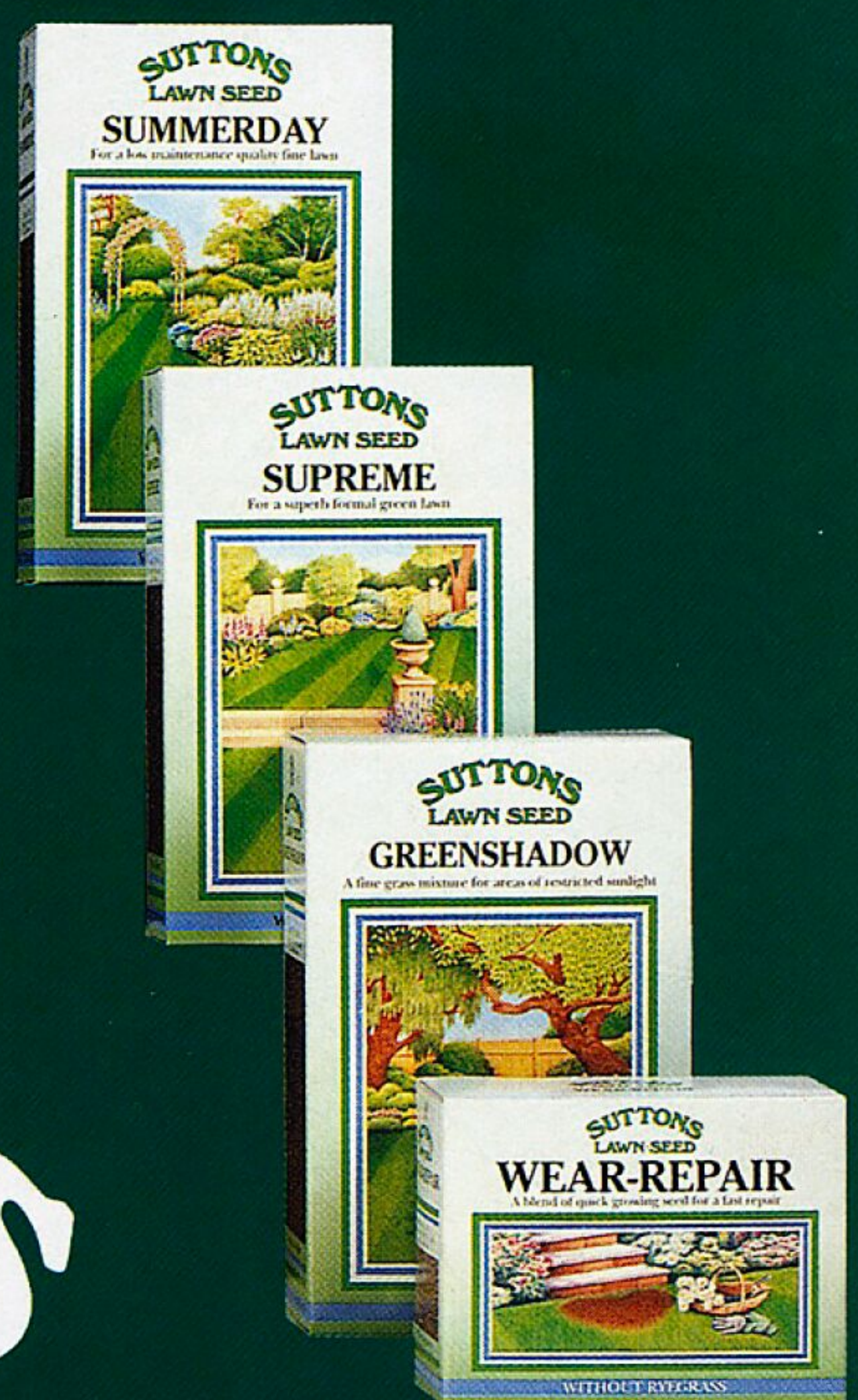
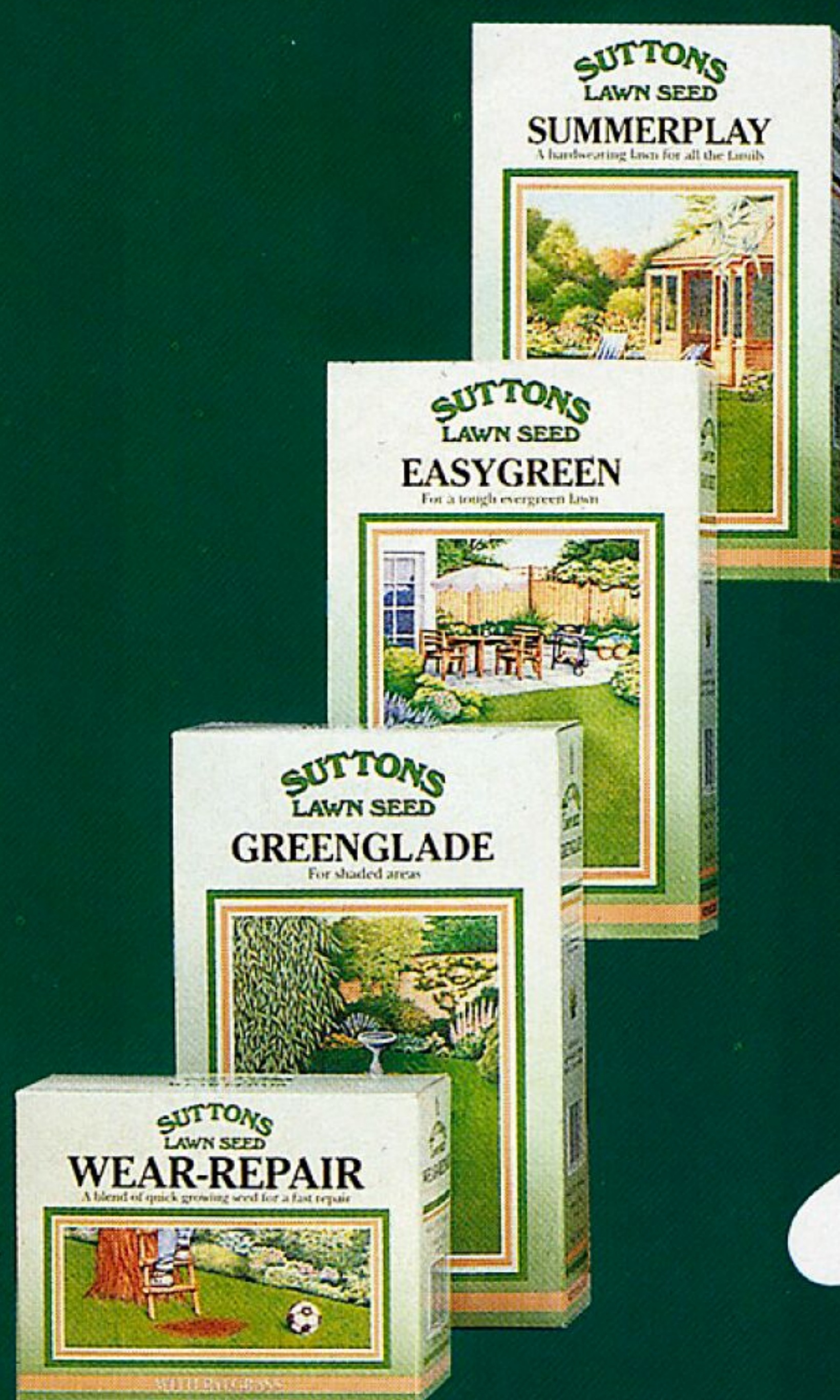
These historic gardens merit a visit in their own right and will be open during our sales. All events RAC signposted.

Supergrass!



(Shhh... Don't tell the neighbours)

Want to know the secret of the perfect lawn? It's Suttons' finest ever lawn seed mixtures. A range of eight unique mixtures specially chosen for your particular type of garden – whether it's sunny or shady, practical or ornamental, or just in need of repair. Easy sowing instructions mean it's simple to conjure up a 'Supergrass' lawn. But don't tell the neighbours. They'll be green enough as it is.



SUTTONS SEEDS

BRITAIN'S FAVOURITE SEEDS



Timely Visits

GARDENS AND NURSERIES TO VISIT IN APRIL AND MAY

Compiled and photographed by Patrick Taylor,
author of *The 1993 Gardener's Guide to Britain*.

KENT

TILE BARN NURSERY

Standen Street, Iden Green,
Benenden TN17 4LB
In the hamlet of Standen
Street Hm S of Benenden
Tel. 0580 240221
Open: Wed to Sat 9-5

Although Liz and Peter Moore sell a few other plants (crocuses, fritillaries and narcissi) the great glory of their rare nursery is the complete list of cyclamen, including some cultivars of their own introduction. Some of the species are not hardy in Britain but the Moores have the very best forms of *Cyclamen hederifolium* – including those with scented flowers and one with a particularly beautiful silver leaf – *C. coum* and the lovely May-flowering sweetly perfumed *C. repandum*. Hardy cyclamen are among the most dependable and ornamental of all garden plants – and this is the place to see and buy them.



LANCASHIRE

REGINALD KAYE LTD

Waithman Nurseries,
Silverdale, Carnforth LA5 0TY
7m NW of Carnforth by
minor roads. Tel. 0524
701252
Open: Mar to Nov, Mon to
Sat 8-12.30, 2-5, Sun 2.30-5

In the heart of potted shrimp country Reginald Kaye Ltd, still in the firm control of the Kaye family, is a nursery of legendary quality. In a long list of alpine plants it has distinguished collections of campanulas, gentians, pinks, primulas and saxifrages. To the general gardener the fern department offers particular attractions – Reginald Kaye is the author of a standard book on the subject. The nursery no longer offers a mail order service, though a good catalogue (60p) is produced. A visit is in any case essential because one of the great virtues of the place is the care with which forms of plants are chosen.



SOMERSET

GREENCOMBE

Porlock TA24 8NU
H m W of Porlock by road
to Porlock Weir
Tel: 0643 82363
Open: Apr to Jul,
Sat to Tue, 2-6.
3H acres

Any garden visitor who has not been to Greencombe should go immediately. It is one of the best gardened places in Britain and although its maker, Joan Loraine, will no doubt find some way of making it better, it seems to me at the moment to be at the peak of perfection. Near the house richly planted ornamental beds (containing many tender rarities) give way to mossy walks threading their way through woodland – maples, rhododendrons and azaleas rise above sheets of erythroniums, trilliums and ferns. If you go, ask Miss Loraine to show you her compost heaps, as rich and black as devil's food cake.



WEST SUSSEX

THE HIGH BEECHES

Handcross RH17 6HQ
1m E of Handcross off B2110
Tel. 0444 400589
Open: 12 Apr to Jun, Sept to
Oct, daily except Wed and
Sun 1-5, Spring Bank Hol
10-5.

Loosely speaking The High Beeches is a woodland garden but its most striking quality is its natural character, taking full advantage of an exquisite undulating site. As large gardens go, The High Beeches is on an intimate scale and as much emphasis is given to a lovely meadow, unploughed in living memory, as to the aristocratic Asiatic shrubs in which the garden is so marvellously rich; superb camellias, magnolias and rhododendrons as well as National Collections of pieris and stewartias. There is nothing remotely ostentatious here, but everywhere you look there is something – a view or a plant – to rivet the attention.



Gardening in the Nineties

THE FACTS AND FIGURES
Compiled by Claire Calman.

Fast-growing figures

Garden visits are blooming – in the last 15 years, visits to gardens have increased by 65 per cent. And The National Trust's top two attractions, each with well over 200,000 visitors a year – Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal in North Yorkshire and Stourhead Garden in Wiltshire – are both gardens. The most popular garden in Britain is Tropical World at Roundhay Park, Leeds, Yorkshire; it draws over one million visitors a year, more than Kew Gardens.



Think pink!

Are you mad for mauve or passionate about pink? A survey of 500 customers shopping at garden centres reveals that pink is the most popular colour choice for gardeners. Orange is one of the most unloved colours in the spectrum, with over

two-thirds of those asked stating that they would never buy orange-flowered plants. Seed breeders say that more gardeners are buying plant seeds in pastel shades and that there is a distinct increase in the demand for white flowers.



Out and about

Most gardeners would rather visit a garden than attend a horticultural show. The top ten shows in Britain attract only 600,000 visitors, and half of these are accounted for by the Chelsea and Hampton Court shows. Our real love is nosing around other people's gardens. The gardens owned by The National Trust and The National Trust for Scotland draw over 870,000 visitors each year. And we're not only intrigued by the grand and glorious. The National Gardens Scheme, which will organise the opening of over 3,000 gardens to the public this year, pulls in over 1.2 million visitors.

Labour of love

Are you a lazy gardener? See how you measure up against the average for your region. People in the South-East and East Anglia top the league with an average of 2.46 hours a week spent gardening. Gardeners in the Midlands spend 2.07 hours a week, while for those in Wales and the South-West it's 2.05 hours and for Londoners 1.95 hours. The Scots restrain their efforts to 1.67 hours and Northerners to just 1.09 hours. Perhaps it's all that rain that's keeping them indoors.

Gardening pet hates

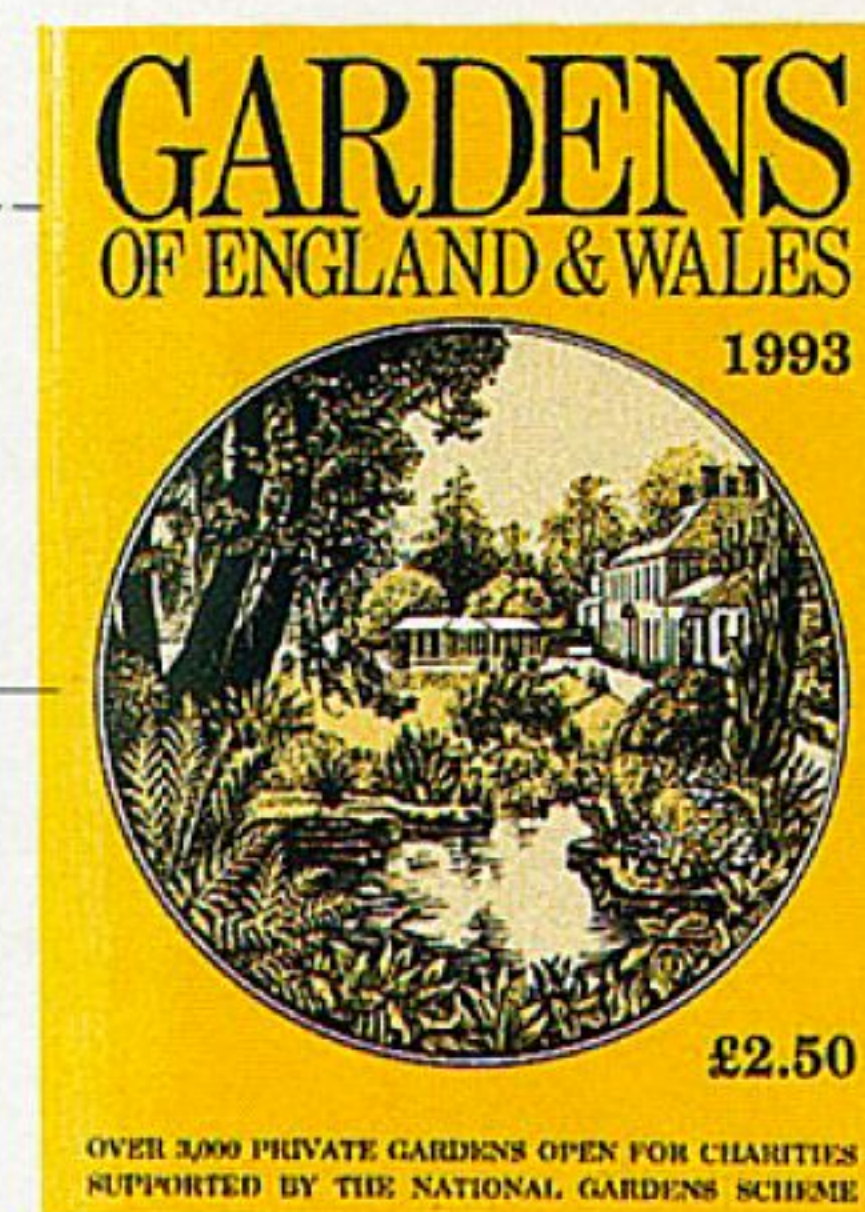
If weeding is the task you hate most, then you're not alone. Britain's gardeners voted weeding their least favourite garden chore. Followed by clearing leaves, mowing, digging, hedge clipping, watering, planting, dead-heading and pruning.

The mighty sword

Some 88 per cent of British gardens have a lawn, and for many gardeners that patch is their pride and joy, for which flower borders are merely an attractive frame. Lawn lovers are happy to spend money on pampering their sweethearts, too – an estimated 1.2 million lawnmowers will be bought this year.

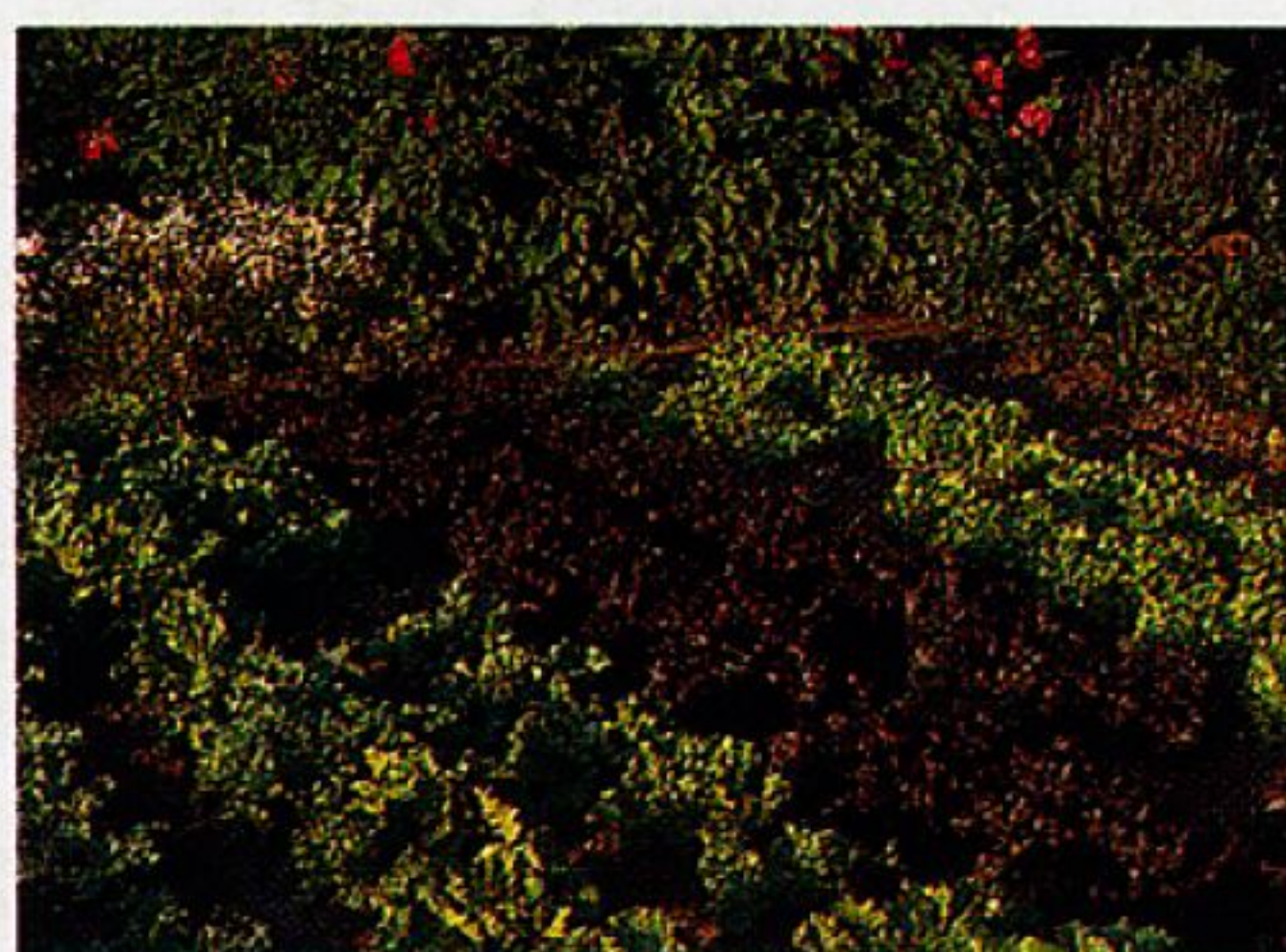
Worth a packet

We spend about £50 million a year on seeds, buying an average of four packets per household. The main reason given for growing from seed is that it's "more rewarding", although many gardeners also quoted economy as being an important factor.



Which sex wields the secateurs?

The old belief that men are kings of the garden is officially out of date. Most men now accept that women make the best gardeners, with only 25 per cent of them clinging, creeper-like, to the notion that they are in charge. Heavy tasks are no longer exclusively handled by men, either – 70 per cent of women say they do the digging. The lawn is the last bastion of male authority, with 80 per cent of them claiming it as their preserve.



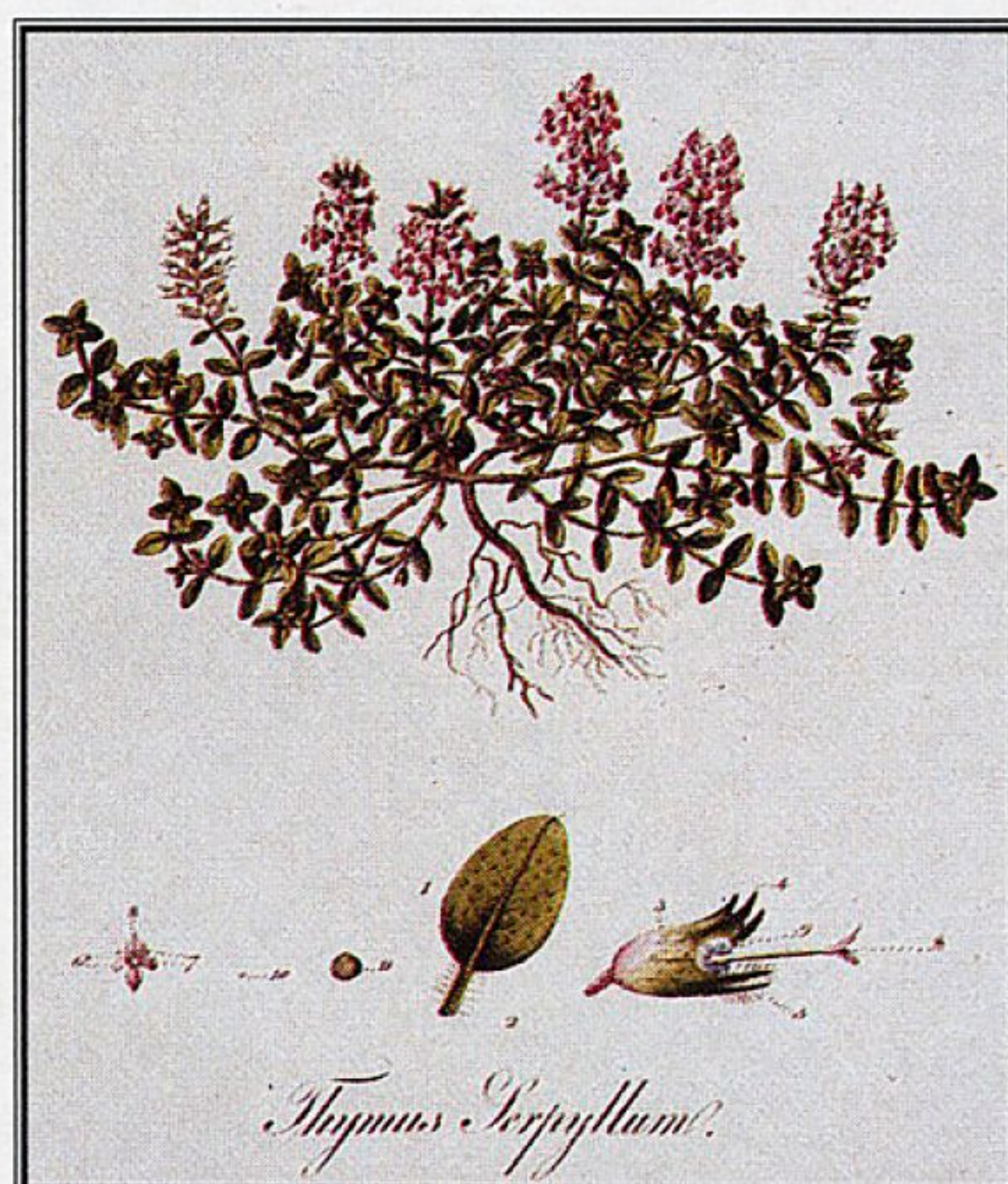
Mind your patch

There are an estimated 380,000-400,000 allotments in Britain. Unfortunately, allotment land is often a prime target for developers as it

tends to be level ground, well located at the edge of a town or village. Those with a high take-up rate are least likely to be under threat, so if there are vacancies at your local allotment site, sign up and start hoeing – your cabbages could save the land from biting the dust.

How does your garden grow?

Although growing your own food has declined since the Second World War, eating the products of our labours still seems to be popular, with 61 per cent of gardeners claiming to grow vegetables in their gardens and 48 per cent growing soft fruit. Herbs – whether for elevating the humblest meal to the level of haute cuisine or simply providing scent in the garden and attracting bees and butterflies – are grown by 58 per cent. The vogue for nostalgia and green gardening shows no sign of abating, with a significant 32 per cent of gardeners cultivating wild flowers.



Gardening around the globe

Gardening is traditionally regarded as Britain's favourite hobby, and it's not surprising when you consider how many Britons have gardens of some sort or another. The Irish lead the world with 85 per cent of people having their own garden, while the British are only one per cent behind. Surprisingly the Dutch who are considered the world's great plant growers, lag behind at 72 per cent. Only 54 per cent of the French have gardens and only 36 per cent of the Italians. It seems the Spanish are the least well-endowed when it comes to owning their own plot – at only nine per cent.

As popular as a pansy

Pansies, with their happy faces, are the most popular flower seeds bought by women, according to research carried out by seed company Mr Fothergill's. Around five million packets are bought each year. They are followed by geranium (Pelargonium), lobelia, impatiens, petunia, marigold, sweet pea, nasturtium and alyssum.

And don't answer back...

Do you talk to your tulips or confide in your clematis and get worked up with your wisteria? You are not alone if you do. About half the gardeners questioned in a survey readily confessed to indulging in a spot of chit-chat with their plants. Almost twice as many women – 60 per cent – as men admitted to this not-so-secret pastime.

Sources Gardening Which?, Mr Fothergill's Seeds, The National Trust, The National Trust for Scotland, The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners, BTA, Unwins Seeds.

Sales & Auctions

TIFFANY DANEFF DISCOVERS GOOD SOURCES FOR GARDEN ANTIQUES

As if the recent rise in thefts from private and public gardens weren't enough, buyers are being advised to watch out for clever fakes. Statuary and stone, mass-produced abroad, can be flaked and distressed to fool, so to be safe buy only from reputable dealers who are members of BADA and LAPADA, the antique dealers' associations. Meanwhile, to protect against theft, items worth over £500 can be registered for £20 plus VAT with the Art Loss Register, 13 Grosvenor Place, London

SW1X 7HH. Tel 071 235 3393. 11% of the 24,000 now registered are statuary and regular checks are made to spot missing items.

On May 18, **Phillips** are selling garden furniture and statuary, including a pair of lifesize, mid-19th century, terracotta figures, in their Works of Art Sale. Prices range from a few hundred pounds to an estimated £4,000. For information, contact Phillips, 101 New Bond Street, London W1Y 9LG. Tel 071 629 6602.

Further north, on April 19, **Henry Spencer** is holding a Sale of Garden Furniture. Prices range from around £50 to £500. Pieces include Victorian cast iron urns and general items like saddle stones. Viewing on Friday and Sunday before the sale. For details, contact Henry Spencer and Sons Ltd, 20 The Square, Retford, Notts DN22 6BX. Tel 0777 708633.

Sotheby's Garden Statuary Sale is at Billingshurst on June 1. As usual there is a

wide range of garden ornaments, structures and furniture including statuary, sundials and pedestals, urns and *jardinières*, water garden fixtures, gates and finials. This will be followed, on June 2, by 'The Garden', a



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selection of paintings, prints and ceramics devoted to flowers and horticulture. Typical of the sale is a charming decorative water-colour of roses by Jessie Keppie, (est £800-£1,200). Catalogues available from Sotheby's, Summers Place, Billingshurst, W.Sussex RH14 9AD. Tel 0403 783933.

Wrotham Park, an imposing private house in Hertfordshire, is the marvellous setting for **Christies** bi-annual sales of garden statuary, architec-

tural fittings and fire surrounds. The spring sale will be held on May 25. Highlights include a 6ft French marble group of Bacchante, Satire and Cherub, (est £12,000 to £15,000) and the green bronze statue of Mercury (see right) in the style of Giambologna, (est £7,000-£8,000). There will be a good selection of Coade stone figures and cast iron coalbrookdale benches. For details, tel 071 839 9060.

To coincide with the Chelsea Flower Show,

Bonhams Chelsea are holding their sale of Garden Statuary on May 25. With many items estimated to sell at below £100 and a ceiling of around £3,000, this is a sale well worth visiting. There is a wide selection of garden ornaments on offer, ranging from Victorian cast iron seats and benches to all manner of planters, urns and statues. Viewing from Sunday 23 until the morning of the sale. For details, contact Bonhams Chelsea, 65-69 Lots Road, London SW10 ORN. Tel 071 351 7111.



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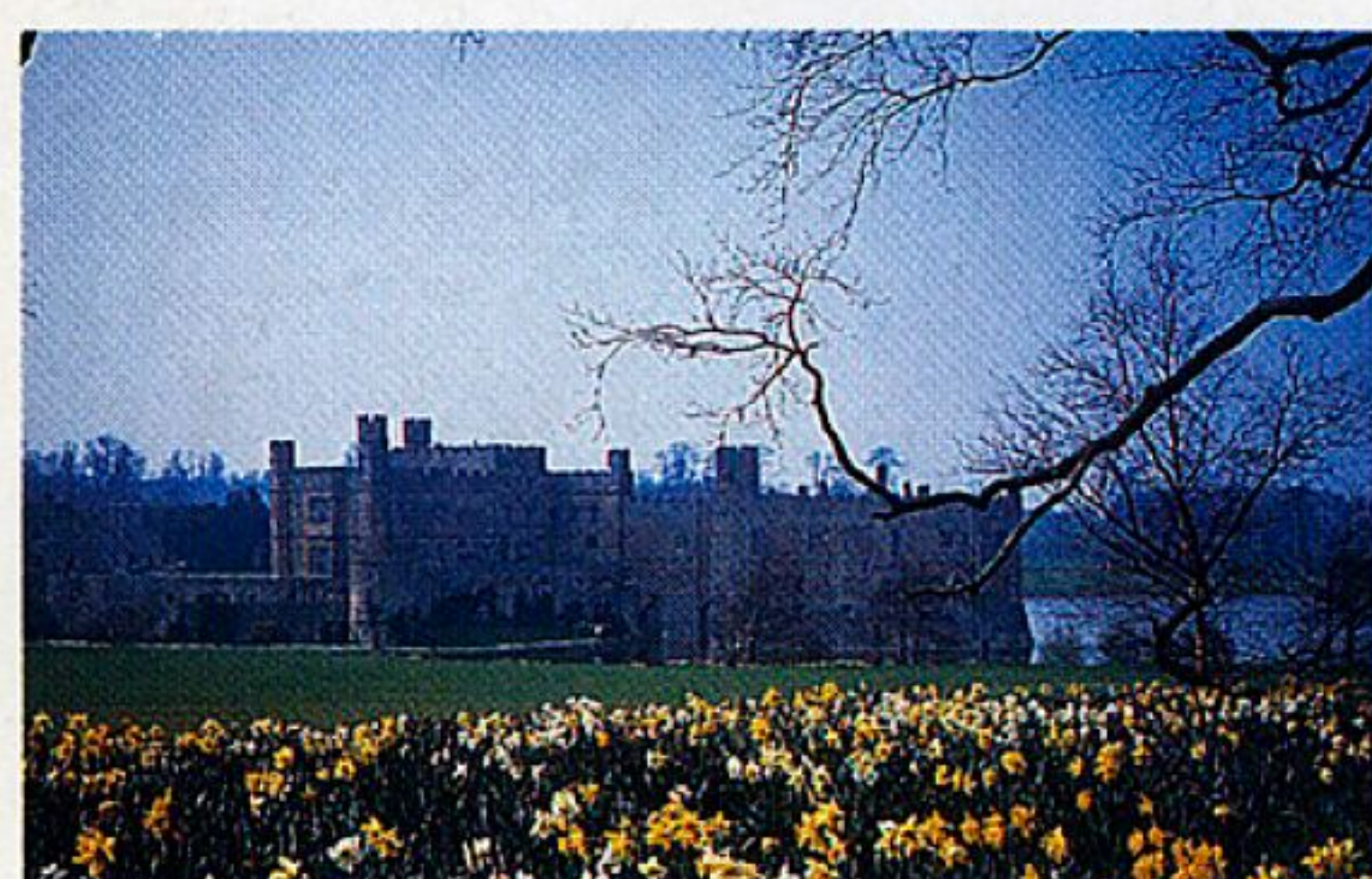
Our next sale on 1st June forms part of **THE GARDEN**, an exhibition and series of sales which also include antique horticultural implements, collectors' items and pictures of flower and garden scenes.

Garden Statuary catalogue: £11 (inc. £1 p&p)

Enquiries: James Rylands (0403) 783908
Sotheby's, Summers Place,
Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 9AD

Gardener's Diary

SHOWS AND EXHIBITIONS LARGE AND SMALL, DURING APRIL AND MAY



March 27-April 4 Spring Gardens Week, Leeds Castle, nr Maidstone, Kent. Supposedly the most romantic castle in England. The gardens include a maze and grotto. Admission £5, children £3, Family Ticket £13.50 (£1.50 extra to enter castle). Tel 0622 765400.

April 3-4 Daffodil Show, Cornish Garden Society, County Demonstration Garden, Probus, nr. Truro, Cornwall. A unique display of horticultural techniques. Open May-Sept (10-5) Admission £2, children free. Tel 0872 70310.

April 7-May 31 Treasures of The Royal Horticultural Society. The first major exhibition of botanical paintings ever staged by the RHS is being held at The Kew Gardens Gallery, Royal

Botanic Gardens, Kew. A symposium on the history of botanical art is planned to accompany the exhibition, on May 15th. Open daily 9.30-4.45, 5.45 Sundays. Tel 081 332 5618/5629. Symposium application forms from The Secretary, Botanical Art Symposium, RHS, 80 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE.

April 8-12 The International Spring Gardening Fair. This five day show, run in association with the RHS, will transform Wembley Conference and Exhibition Centre into what may be the largest indoor gardening event since the launch of the

Chelsea Flower Show over 100 years ago. Opening times 9.30-7.30 (5.30 final day). Ticket numbers are limited and have to be purchased in advance. Admission: non RHS members £12 (£9 after 4pm); family tickets (2 adults, 2 children over the age of five) £30 (no children under five admitted). Special discount for RHS members. Hotline tel 081 900 1234.

April 16-18 Spring Show at Capel Manor. Capel Manor Horticultural and Environmental Centre, Bullsmoor Lane, Enfield, Middlesex. Plant sales, tours of the gardens, *Gardening Which?* demonstrations plus gardeners question time. Tel 0992 763849.

April 22-25 Spring Flower Show, Valley Gardens, Harrogate. Displays by the Alpine Garden Society and Daffodil Society, plant market. Admission £8-£6, children free. Tel 0423 500600.



April 24-May 2 The 14th World Orchid Show. A major exhibition at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre in Glasgow. An extravaganza of exotic orchids from around the world. Tel 031 557 2478.

May 7-9 Malvern Spring Gardening Show. Set among the magnificent Malvern Hills, this show is everything a country flower show should be. The Three Counties Showground is clearly sign-posted, 8 miles from the M5 and M50 and parking is free.

Admission: RHS members £3.50; non-members £4.50 (pre-show booking £3.60); children under 16 free. Tel 0684 892751.

May 6-August 8 Gertrude Jekyll Exhibition to celebrate the 150th anniversary of her birth is on show at the Museum of Garden History, St. Mary-at-Lambeth, Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7JU. Tel 071 261 1891.

May 14-16 Journées des Plantes de Courson, Domaine de Courson, 91680, Courson, Monteloup. 35k South of Paris, between Limours and Arpajon. This bi-annual show takes place in the grounds of a 17th century chateau. Specialist nurseries from all over Europe provide an exhilarating display. Admission 60F. Tel 010 331 64589012.

May 14-17 The Bournemouth International Garden Festival, Somerley House, Verwood, nr Ringwood, Bournemouth. A new show for the South, Hampton Court on a smaller scale. Tel 0202 536655.

May 25-28 The Chelsea Flower Show, Royal Hospital Grounds, Chelsea. The highspot of the gardening calendar but book now before it is too late. Visitor numbers are limited and all tickets must be purchased in advance. (No under-fives admitted) Admission: May 25 and 26 8-8 RHS members only £14 (£7.50 after 3.30); May 27, 8-8 RHS members £10; public sessions 3.30-8 £10; May 28 Public Sessions 8-5 £16. Credit card bookings 071 379 4443. Hotline 071 828 1744.



FORWARD PLANNER.

June 2-4 National Society of Allotment Gardeners annual conference. For details tel 0262 678258

June 2-5 Royal Bath and West of England Show. Tel 0749 823 211.

June 5 Herb Society's Summer Seminar, The University Botanic Gardens, Cambridge. 10-3.30, £18 for members, £25 for non-members. Tel 0284 810653

June 4-6 Great Garden and Countryside Festival, Holker Hall, nr Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria. Tel 05395 58328.

June 16-June 20 BBC Gardeners World Live, including the RHS June Flower Show, is planned at the NEC Birmingham. Tel 021 780 4141.

June 19-20 Festival of Gardening, Hatfield House, Hertfordshire. Tel 0707 264412.

July 7-July 11 Hampton Court International Flower Show. Tel 071 821 0132.

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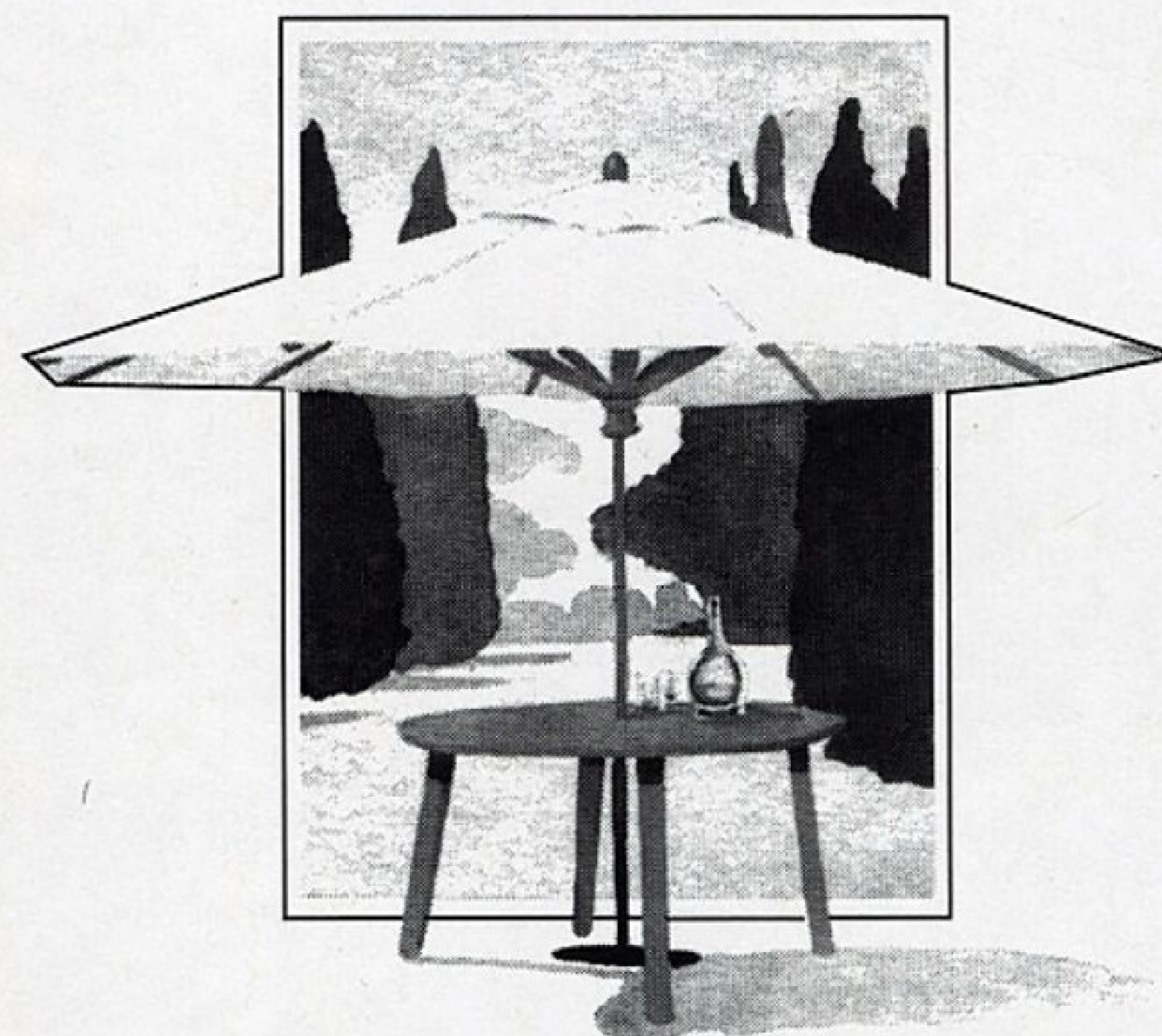
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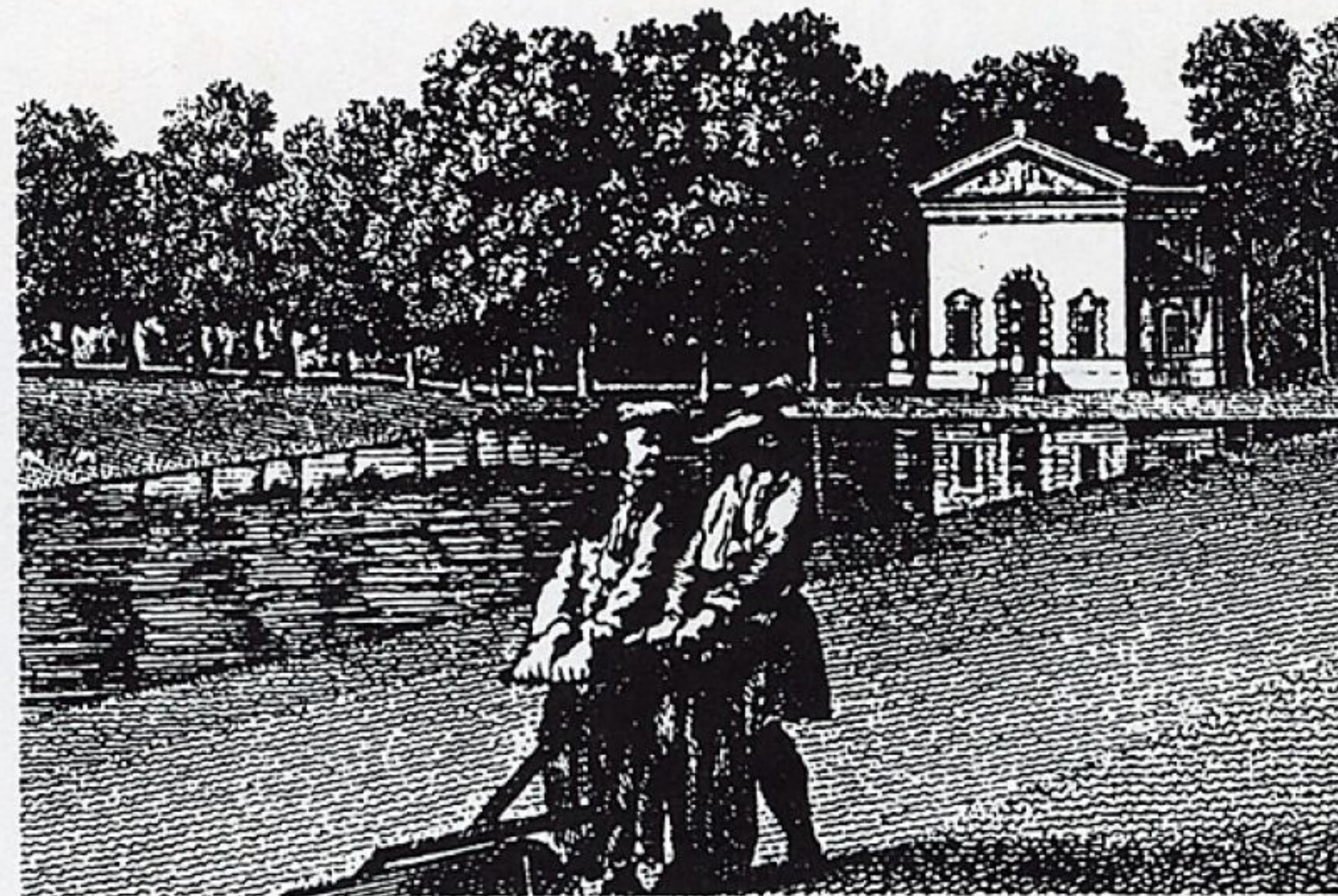
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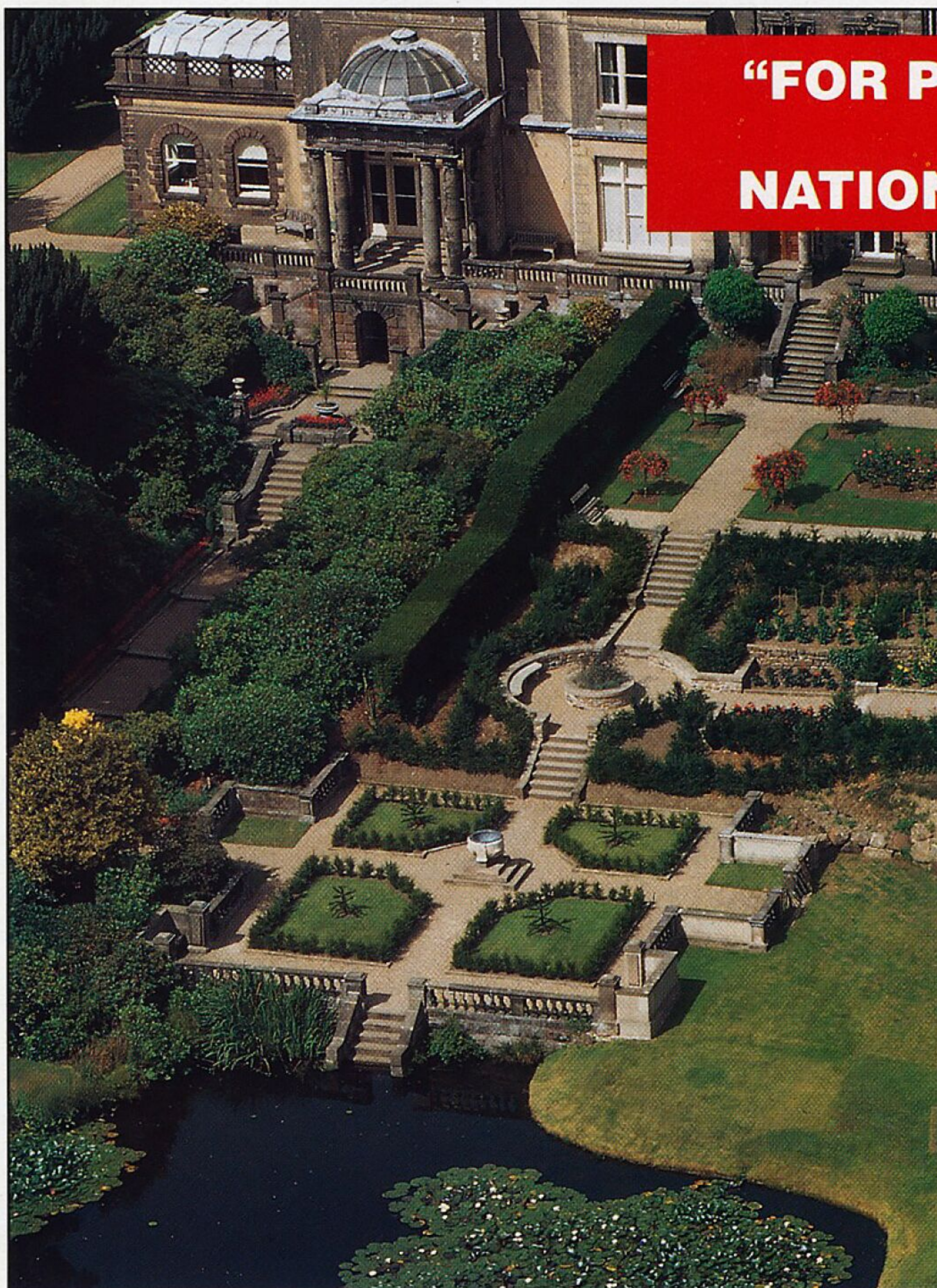


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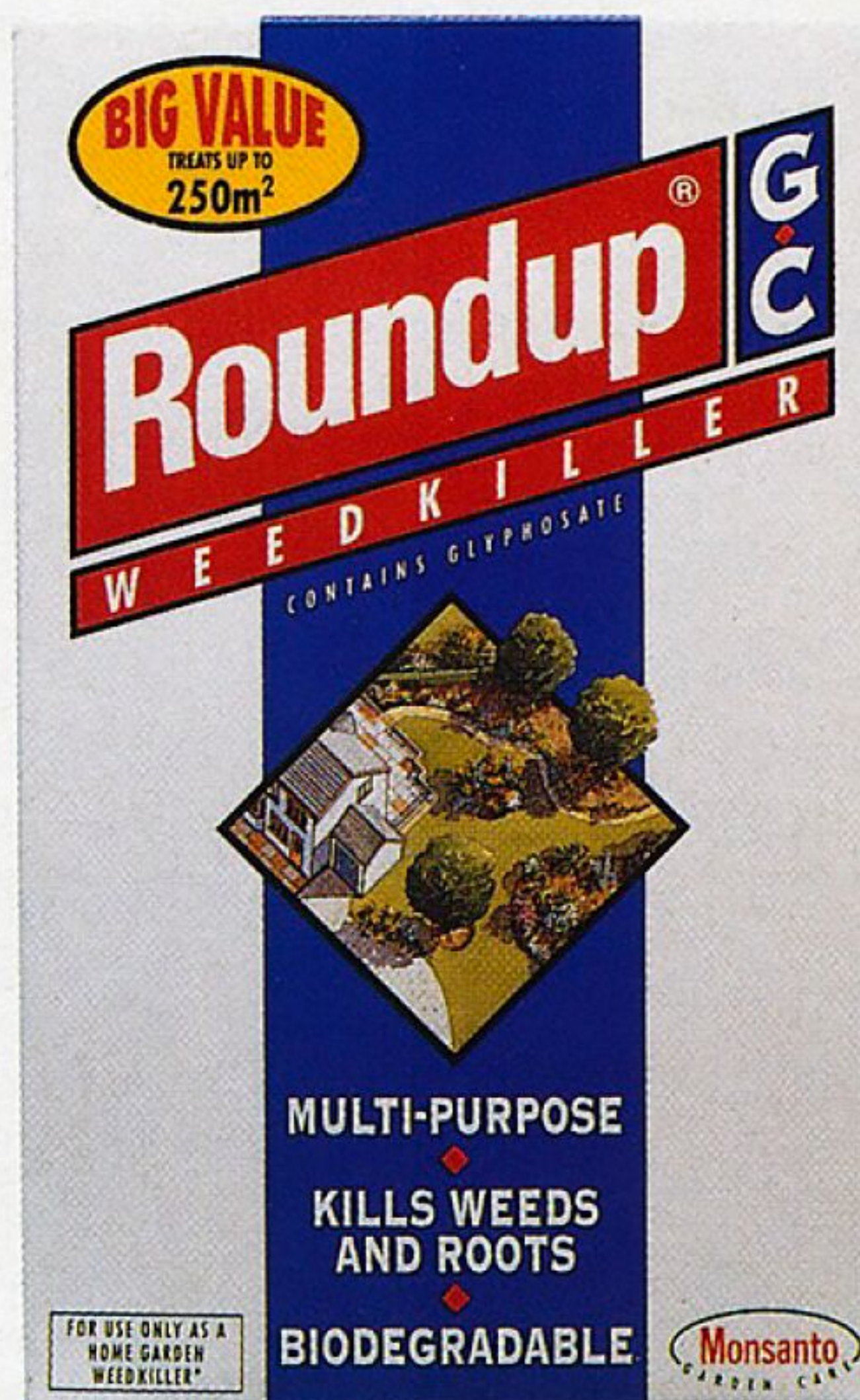
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GARDENS

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The Competition:

We would like you to design a roof garden which will be featured in **Gardens Illustrated** and entered for the Chelsea Flower Show 1994. The competition, run in conjunction with the Society of Garden Designers, is open to talented garden designers of all ages, including students who are on or who have completed a course in garden design.

The Prize:

Designing and building your own garden at the Chelsea Flower Show is the ultimate ambition of any aspiring designer. It is also the best possible start for anyone wishing to pursue a career in garden design.

TO ENTER:

Each entrant must submit plans showing **A roof garden for the nineties**. At a time when people want to make the most of their outdoor space, we want to encourage garden designers to scale new heights in stylish planting and provide practical ideas for a domestic roof garden. Derry & Tom's roof garden, built in the 1930s (see right), is a masterpiece, with fountains and flamingos. This is your chance to create another roof-top sensation.



THE JUDGES:

Penelope Hobhouse and Anna Pavord, both Associate Editors of **Gardens Illustrated**, Claudia Zeff, the Art Director, plus Ryl Nowell, Chairman of The Society of Garden Designers and Victor Shanley, the Vice-Chairman. Entries must be the original work of those competing. The judges' decision will be final.

THE CRITERIA:

The overall cost of the design and building of the garden should not exceed £15,000. Approximate costing and a list of suggested suppliers should accompany each entry. The competition is open to designers working on their own or up to four designers working as a team. Winners must be available to oversee the making of their garden at Chelsea Flower Show 1994.

SUBMISSIONS:

For full details and an entry form, write to: GARDENS ILLUSTRATED DESIGN COMPETITION, John Brown Publishing, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, London SW6 6LU enclosing an SAE.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS is June 14 1993.



Mole

Virulent attacks on innocent garden wildlife have been appearing with alarming regularity in the newspapers. The *Independent* has it in for the fluffy squirrels that seek food and warmth beyond the kitchen catflap; the *Evening Standard* reports on “the gargantuan flopsy bunnies” that are “ravaging” Housing Minister Sir George Young’s garden; and the *Daily Telegraph* runs a rolling recipe service for the extermination of handsome, investigative moles. This column takes the opportunity to distance itself from these misguided publications.

One small mercy brought by the continuing recession is the temporary lifting of threats to gardens by voracious developers. The recent appearance on the market of David Wheeler’s stylishly designed acres, in Rhayader, caused quite a ripple through gardening’s bookish fringe. Wheeler is proprietor and editor of the literary gardening quarterly, *Hortus*. Now, I hear, the proposed suburbanisation of his Welsh valley has been abandoned, and the sale of his farmhouse is off.

In celebration, Wheeler has decided to build more raised beds in the potager. His enthusiasm for food is fully exposed this month with the launch of his companion quarterly, *Convivium: The Journal of Good Eating*. But you will search in vain for the tempering eulogies to red meat among the articles on potatoes and watercress production. Alas, Wheeler is a vegetarian.

Short-sighted though I am, I have been noticing – with mounting puzzlement – that the descriptive tags attached to woody plants, in particular conifers, on sale in my local garden centre, are giving less than fulsome indications of height. “*Abies koreana*, Korean fir, 5–6 ft; *Pinus leucodermis*, Bosnian pine, 3–4 ft”; and so on. What is going on? Korean fir grows to 40 feet, and Bosnian pine to 60 feet. “We are stating the approximate height after 10 years,” an assistant revealed.

It seems few plant-buyers are interested in long-term planning these days. John Ravenscroft, genial sovereign of the vast Bridgmore Nurseries near Nantwich, Cheshire, tells me that 1993 will be another boom year for the “quick fix garden”.

Sales of annuals and herbaceous plants have never been higher; plants that take their time reaching maturity, like trees and the “shrubby stalwarts of the 1970s”, are now either avoided (sales are on the decline) or chosen for their instant effect.

The mood is confirmed by Lord Cavendish, whose garden at Holker Hall, Cumbria, won the coveted Christies/Historic Houses Association 1992 Garden of the Year Award. “Nothing captivates today’s visitors less than the idea of planting for future generations,” he told me, as we walked around the new formal gardens. “People are astonished that someone would put in a group of tree magnolias, which can take twenty or more years to produce flowers, knowing they may never live to see them bloom.”

Until the new crop of gardeners discovers that the lasting pleasure of gardening comes from the continuing evolution of projects and the miraculous process of growth, I suppose we shall carry on witnessing these strange trends and marketing practices

Mole is not the only writer on gardening matters to suffer from sensory deficiencies. I now learn that to obtain a proper impression of a garden the two editors of the *Good Gardens Guide*, Graham Rose and Peter King, have to perform super-human feats of imagination. Rose is colour-blind, and King has no sense of smell.

1993 is only the fourth year the *Good Gardens Guide* has appeared, but already it has established itself as an essential accompaniment to car journeys. As in Egon Ronay, the best gardens receive star ratings, but for me the most alluring marker is the sign indicating that “the inspector enjoyed a tea of particularly high quality.”

Alarmingly, says the preface, “this is a pleasure which may have to be foregone in future.” What, are Rose and King now losing their sense of taste too? No: “Impending legislation will insist that owners who open their gardens regularly must meet costly professional standards of food preparation and premises.” What is the justification for this? How many visitors have been poisoned by home-made sponge cakes? This column will investigate. Meanwhile, please report garden sightings of suspicious gentlemen in pin-stripes.

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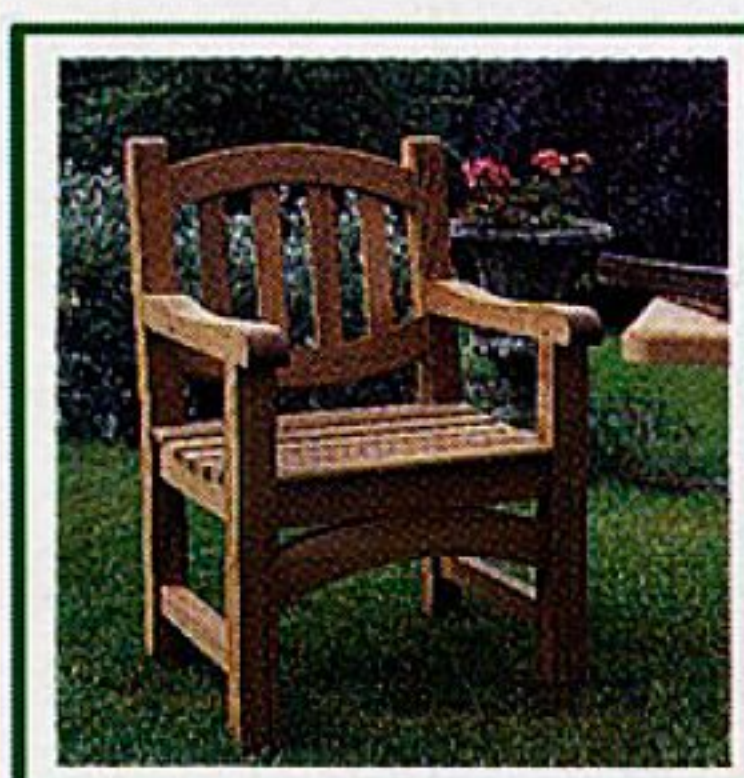
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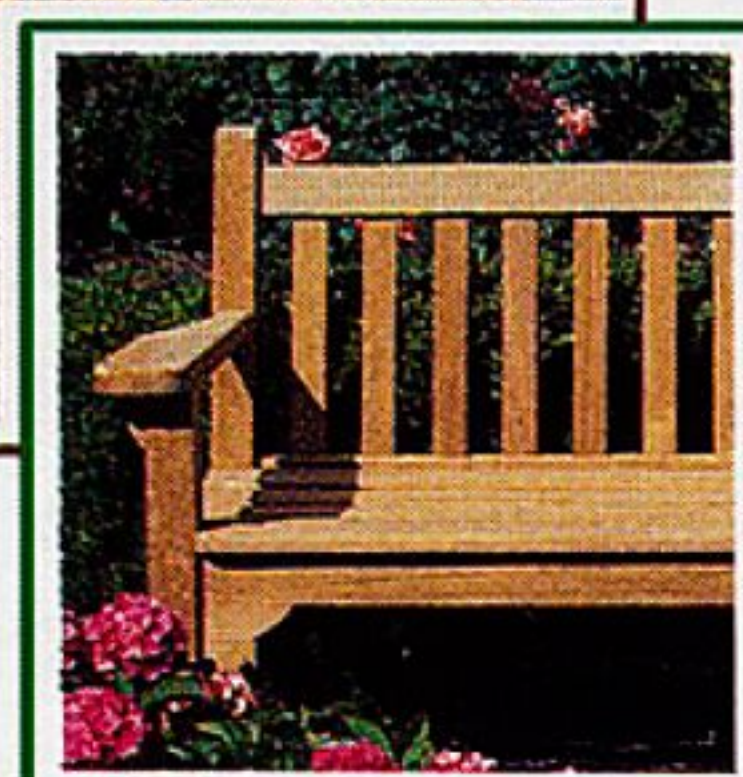
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 Education and Marketing Department,
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Telephone: 081 - 332 5623



On Course

A SELECTIVE GUIDE TO GARDEN DESIGN COURSES

Compiled by Tiffany Daneff

On the borders

Pamela Schwerdt and Sibylle Kreutzberger recently retired after thirty years gardening at Sissinghurst. After Vita Sackville-West's death, they became custodians of the magnificent borders, maintaining them as Vita would have wished. On May 5, they will give a talk on Preparing and Maintaining a Mixed Border at a one-day gardening course at Balcombe House. This 18th-century country house with long borders provides the ideal opportunity to watch Pamela and Sibylle at work, staking and dividing. The course costs £60. Further details are available from Border Lines, Wanford Mill House, Bucks Green, Rudgwick, W Sussex RH12 3JG. Tel 0403 822883.

Course at Kew

For those interested in a career in garden history, the Kew School of Garden Design offers a five-week course from June 7-July 9, led by the award-winning designer and author, John Brookes. Set in the grounds of the botanical gardens, the course covers design, draftsmanship and horticulture as well as offering help in running your own business. The course costs £1,775 plus VAT. For details contact Andrew Jamieson,

Kew School of Garden Design, Education and Marketing Department, Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB. Tel 081 940 1171.

New garden design college at Oxford

This year, Duncan Heather, a young designer still in his twenties, has started his own Oxford College of Garden Design at Wolfson College, set in gardens bordering on the banks of the river Cherwell. The college opens with a four day a week course, running from July 19-August 12 and costing £1,440 plus VAT. The course centres on two real projects: a small courtyard and a large town or small country garden. Lecturers include rose expert, John Mattock, and leading pond expert, Anthony Archer-Wills.

The college also offers a one-year, one day a week course, costing £2,530, plus VAT, starting on September 22. For details write to the Administrative Office, Oxford College of Garden Design, 34 Kings Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. Tel 0491 411161.

The Japanese touch at Tatton Park

If you have long admired the Japanese way of

gardening but wondered how to achieve similar results, Keith Gott of the Japanese Garden Company, is running specialist two and three-day courses at the Japanese Garden School in Cheshire. The Japanese garden at Tatton Park, one of the finest in Europe, was created in 1910 by Baron Egerton, who brought Japanese craftsmen and a Shinto temple from Japan.

Half the course will be devoted to lectures, slide shows and demonstrations; the other half will be practical, giving students the opportunity to build a bamboo fence or work with bonsai. The two-day course on April 3-4 costs £100 and the three-day courses on May 3-5 and June 21-23, cost £198. For details contact The Japanese Garden School, Tatton Park Gardens, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 6QN. Tel 0565 750780

Long distance learning from home

A godsend for those who cannot attend a year's full time course, The English Gardening School at the Chelsea Physic Garden is now offering a one-year correspondence course leading to a full garden design qualification. Courses starting on July 15 and October 15 are now in great demand and you should register at least six weeks in

advance, probably sooner. The course is divided into nine subjects areas, covering all areas of planning and planting, both theoretical and practical. Twice a year, students will be invited to a group workshop in Chelsea. The course costs £411.25 inc VAT. For details contact The English Gardening School, The Chelsea Physic Garden, 66 Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HS. Tel 071 352 4347.

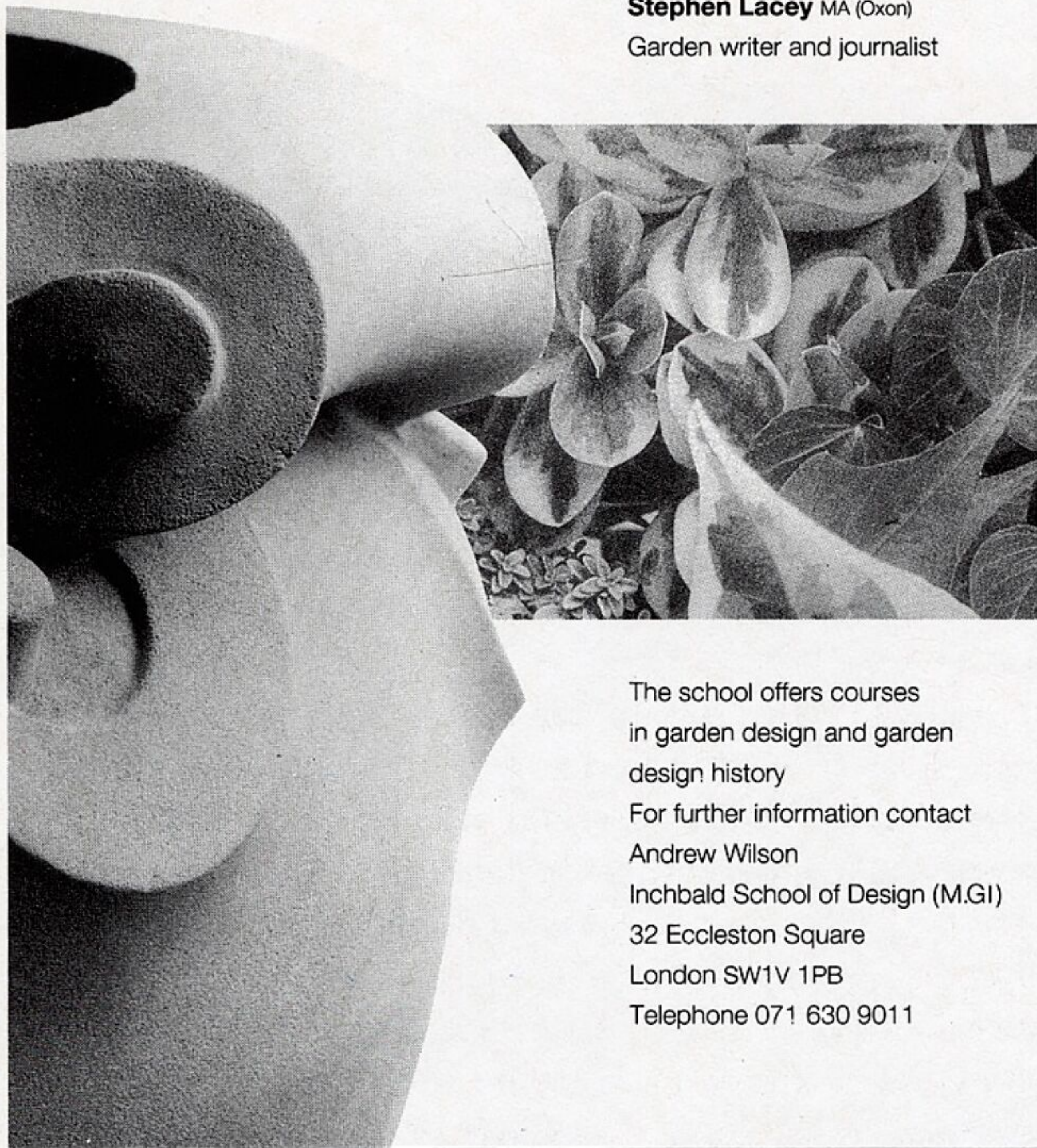
From design weekends to full-time courses at Capel Manor

Design Your Own Garden on April 17-18 at Capel Manor. As the title suggests, by the end of the weekend students will have completed an initial design with the help of senior tutor, the designer David Stephens, landscape architect, John Moreland, and television broadcaster and author, Jill Billington. This course costs £205.

This beautiful Georgian house set in 30 acres of themed gardens in Middlesex offers a host of part-time, BTEC and two new BA degree courses in Garden Design and Environment and Business Management which will start this September. For a prospectus contact Capel Manor College, Bullsmoor Lane, Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 4RQ. Tel 0992 763849.

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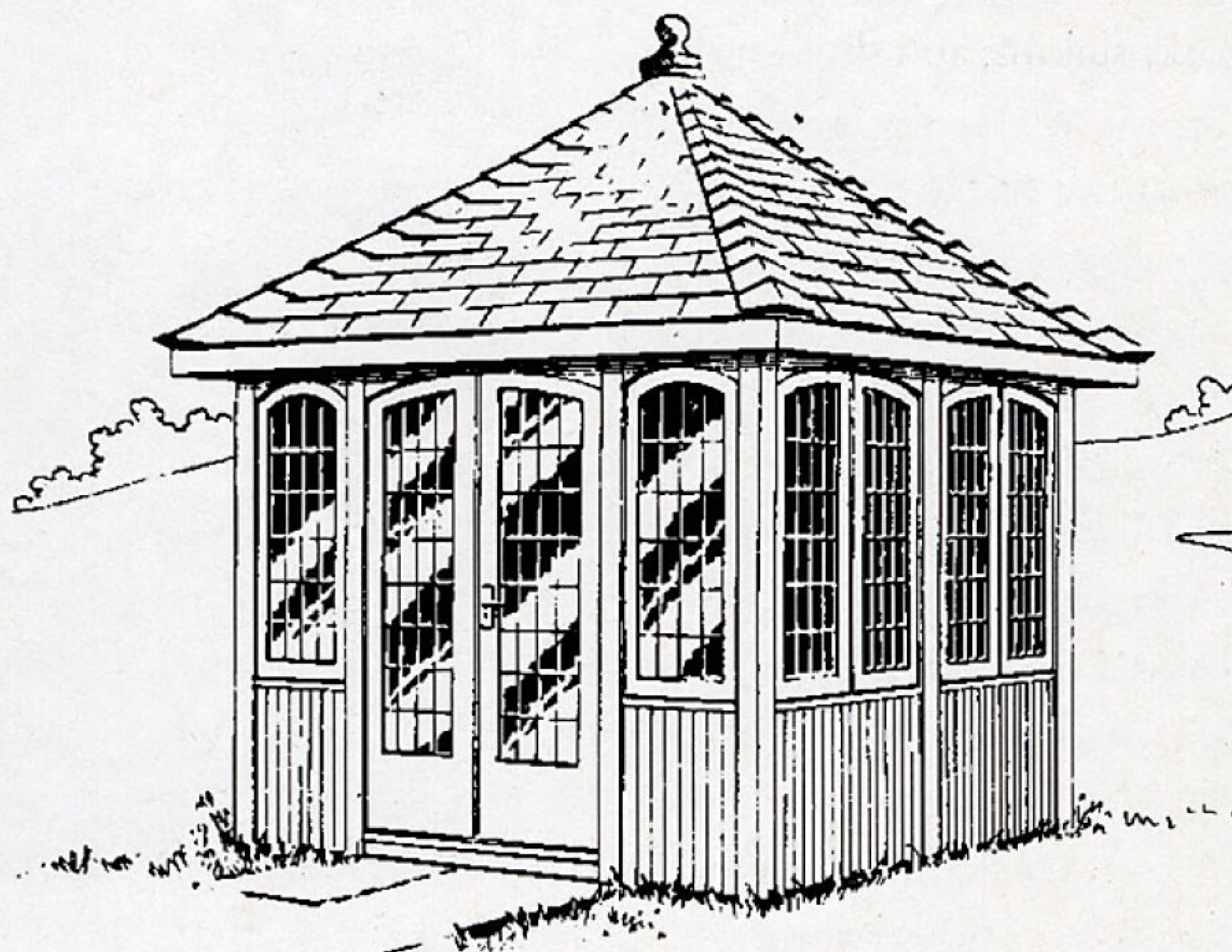
There are a range of courses on offer to help you develop this enthusiasm. The School of Garden Design within the College offers:

- * One year part time course leading to a Certificate in Garden Design. (Second course commences in April 1993.)
- * Two week Garden Design Course, in July 1993.

In addition, Merrist Wood College itself offers:

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To find out more contact Mrs Lorna Fenn, Academic Registrar at Merrist Wood College, Worplesdon, Guildford, Surrey GU3 3PE. Tel 0483 232424. Please quote: AW/31.



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GARDENERS' BOOKSHELF

HIGHGROVE: PORTRAIT OF AN ESTATE

by HRH The Prince of Wales & Charles Clover
Chapmans, £20

Highgrove used to be very dull, a plain Jane of a house built at the tired end of the Georgian period, standing in an uneventful piece of Gloucestershire countryside before the valleys begin dipping dramatically into Laurie Lee country. Years ago, I visited it as an architecturally snobbish teenager and deemed it profoundly uninspiring. There was certainly no garden to speak of – just an avenue of golden yew clumps leading the eye to nowhere in particular. A dozen summers ago this is what the Prince of Wales found, but unlike me he had a vision.

Today Highgrove is another world. It is as though a brilliant tailor had given it an entirely new suit of clothing. The dull house has been wrought handsome by the addition of Felix Kelly's pediment and pilasters which adorn its facade. The Prince was right. Highgrove has got a special feeling; it had simply been lying in abeyance waiting to be brought to life.

It was the giant cedar of Lebanon which finally persuaded him to buy it. Around it he saw a blank canvas and knew he could create something wonderful. Being a new gardener, and having only planted ceremonial trees with brand new silver spades, the Prince asked The Marchioness of Salisbury, the creator of her own garden at Cranborne Manor and Hatfield House, to help him. Her first suggestion was the planting of the neat room enclosed by yew hedges which hugs the sunny side of the house and encompasses a romantic collection of old-fashioned roses, honeysuckle and lavender, which spill lusciously over the edges of formal beds. It is a safe and predictable recipe.

More interesting and more enviable is the paved garden around the corner of the western side of the house, in which the Prince had a stronger hand.

The sculptor Simon Verity has made a fountain of

whales (his pun), which rise from a small pool in the middle, and the architect Willie Bertram's small stone 'kiosks' at the corners finish off what in effect is an outdoor dining room, with more plants than paving stones as its carpet, and with running water as its accompanying music. The great cedar tree stands sentinel, and beyond the once dull avenue vamped up with new yew hedges (topiarized by Sir Roy Strong into swags) leads the eye to a distant barn and dovecote.

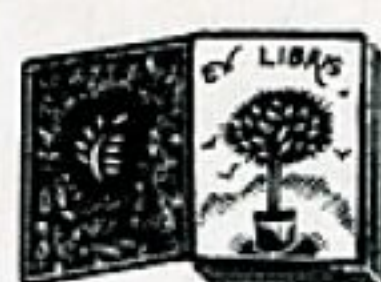
The deeply waved edges of the 'cottage garden' beds lead you north-westward on a circular perambulation of the whole demesne. This informal area was inspired by Rosemary Verey, the Prince's neighbour. Together they

planted perennials and bedding plants far into a June night in its first summer. It is a rip-roaring success. They have recently been working on a woodland garden together, though by the Prince's own admission, he bungled by directing a JCB himself to do all the wrong things on the wave of an enthusiastic desire to change the contours of the area. There is still an inordinate amount of sub-soil lingering on top where it shouldn't, and his desire to grow azaleas and rhododendrons which hate his area anyway may be unsuccessful in the long run.

Out of the woodland and into one of the best walled

gardens in the country, the domain of David Brown who nurtures and loves and wheels nearly a hundred barrows of well-rotted manure on to this chemical-free wealth of arched apple trees, sweetbriar hedges and decoratively planted vegetables, forming a Villandryesque kaleidoscope pattern. Lady Salisbury, who designed the garden at Crichel in Dorset in the form of a St Andrew's Cross which the Prince much admired, was the main inspiration here at Highgrove. Only the rarer forms of apple (all the fruit trees were a gift from the Sussex Women's Institute) suffer from debilitating diseases. On the whole, as long as everything is fed well and the soil thoroughly dug, it thrives – this organic garden is the best advert for muck mysticism you could ever wish to see. The





wild garden is also irritatingly perfect, but take heart, for the Prince failed at first, even with Miriam Rothschild by his side. Twelve years on, the meadow between the walled garden and the house is becoming more and more like the background to Botticelli's *Venus*.

The whole garden at Highgrove, with its different moods and inspirations, now flows together. This is because with his growing knowledge and love of gardening it has become the Prince's *own* and no longer that of some of England's great lady gardeners. The Prince knows his onions now, and certainly his own mind.

Highgrove: Portrait Of An Estate tells the story of Highgrove in Prince Charles' own words, from the first barren beginnings to these voluptuous and organic point-proving ends. Though the organic farming sermons come thick and fast and point to Japan and Switzerland as being goody goody nations (two countries with terrain less like England would be hard to choose), the message hits home. Of course every thinking man would garden and farm organically if they could afford to lose the money during the years it takes for the soil to recover from the added chemicals. The fact is, money rules. The Prince, being rich, has done the right thing and there are thousands who should follow his lead. "As far as I am concerned," he concludes, "I felt it right in my heart to attempt to preserve this course and I must remain true to my conviction."

Candida Lycett Green

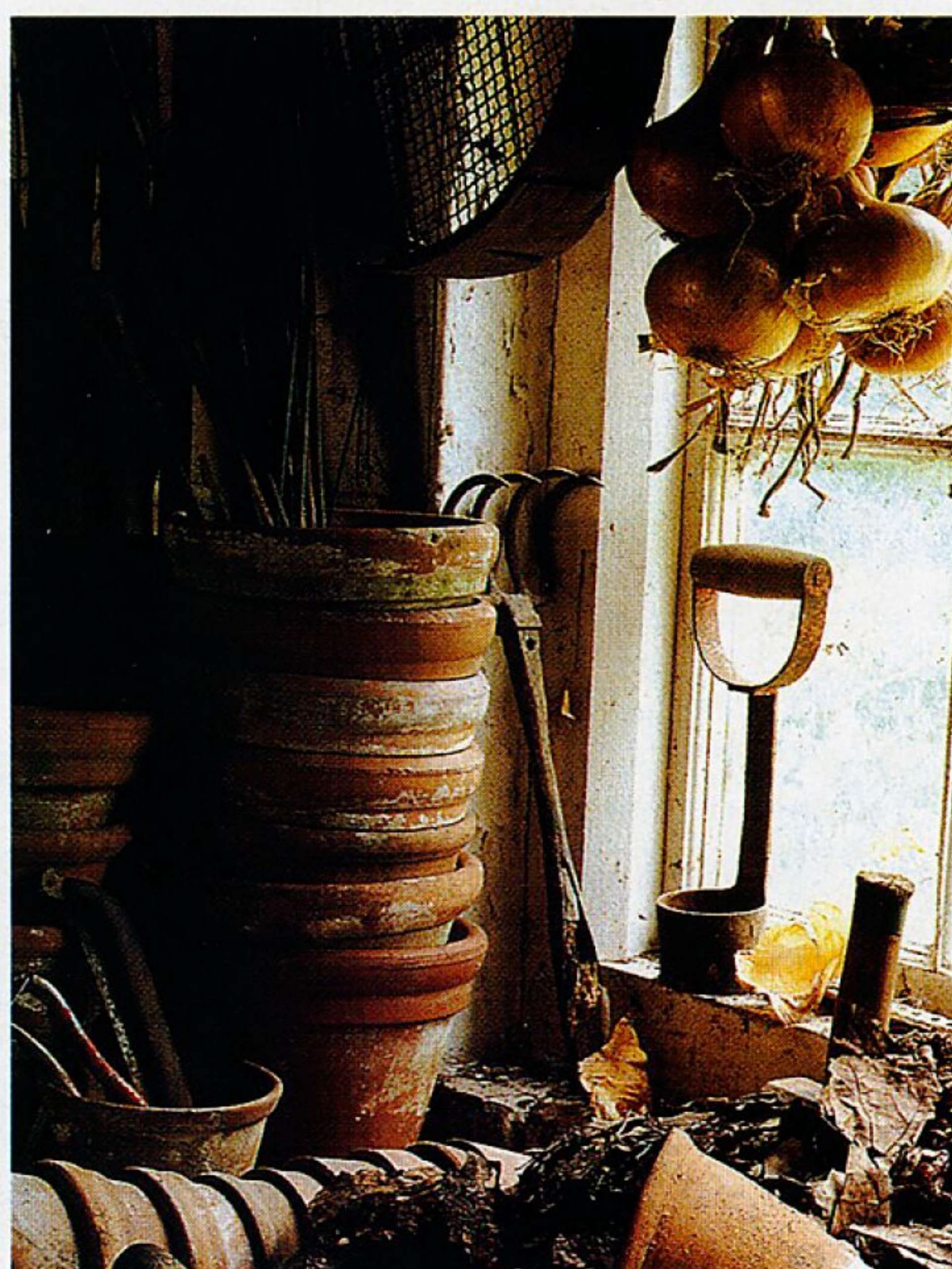
THE GOOD OLD-FASHIONED GARDENER

by Nigel Colborn

Letts, £17.95

From its title you would be forgiven for thinking that this book is a nostalgic eulogy to historic gardening. But this is far from being the case, for it deals not only with the historical practices and artefacts of gardening, but relates them to the present. As a practice, gardening goes back almost to the dawn of civilisation, but it is only in the past 100 years or so that it has become Britain's most important recreational activity. Books on gardening in all its aspects have proliferated, along with television and radio programmes, to cater for the popular appeal of modern gardening. But almost every gardener is aware, dimly, of a lore that has accumulated over the centuries which conditions success or failure.

For some this lore has a mystique, yet it springs only from the past, from old-time gardeners who learned the



hard way through trial and error. The art of gardening has been an evolutionary process with skills and tastes developing through human imagination and effort. Nigel Colborn's book has put the past into perspective very concisely, covering a wide spectrum, from fruit to flowers, trees to trellis, vegetables to vines. Garden design, past and present, is put into its proper context as something that has evolved, fitting in with the economics as well as the tastes of successive generations.

I like the author's references to the range of tools and artefacts, and how so much physical energy was needed compared with present day aids to gardening. He obviously believes, as do I, that gardeners who do not shrink from physical labour such as digging, find it healthful and more effective than most labour-saving devices such as mechanical diggers or rotovators. Successful gardening depends so much on the devotion and effort of the gardener, and in this sense the book is inspiring to those receptive to such implications. Throughout the book there are reminders not only of our legacies from the past but of the rewards that come from tender loving care in one's attitude to gardening.

Reference is also made to the results of breeding new varieties, which are not always improvements. The author is somewhat scathing, for example, on the lack of taste in modern strawberries, but he is otherwise very fair-minded when making comparisons between the ancient and modern and the techniques used both for achieving good

growth and in dealing with such hazards as weeds, pests and diseases.

Nigel Colborn has succeeded in condensing a wide subject into a modest sized book that attracts attention not only because of its content in words, but for its illustrations. The colour photography is superb and the line drawings all add interest to enhance what I see as a deservedly wide appeal.

Alan Bloom

GARDENS IN PROVENCE

by Louisa Jones

Flammarion, £30

Reprinted and distributed by Thames and Hudson in May

On the hill leading up to Gordes, one of the Luberon's glitzy hill villages, there is an elegant garden which features hundreds of hummocks of lavender, with pencil cypresses set between them, like exclamation marks. It clearly belongs to someone who is seriously rich, and I now know, thanks to **Gardens in Provence**, that it is British owned. It is just one of the sumptuous estates pictured in Louisa Jones' scholarly book that anyone who loves Provence will be tempted to buy.

It's a glossy coffee table production, with descriptions and pictures of dream gardens, some of them owned by old Provençal families, many of them *maisons secondaires* of wealthy Germans, Swiss, Americans and British, who drop in for the summer; people like Terence Conran whose *mas* at le Paradou is featured (see right). One of the most elegant gardens in the book has little or no flowers in it, simply meticulously clipped shrubs, and is owned by a woman who works for a Paris couture house. Most seem to be owned by antique dealers, interior decorators, in short, those in the style business.

One of the great myths about the Midi is that it is

warm all year round. So it will surprise the uninitiated to find there are few palm trees shown in the book, and no bougainvilleas. It's true that temperatures seldom dive very low on the Côte d'Azur, protected as it is by the Alpes Maritimes. But move a few kilometres inland to Grasse or to Peter Mayle country and frosts are common – this year we even had snow. So many plants familiar to Britain are featured, plus the bonus of anything that would be considered 'tender' in Northern Europe.

Louisa Jones points out that there are no herb gardens as such in Provence, the place that everyone associates with aromatic plants. This, she argues, is because so many herbs grow wild in the *garrigue*, the scrub-covered hillsides. I am pleased to tell her that now there are at least two. One is a medieval physic garden being lovingly re-created at Notre-

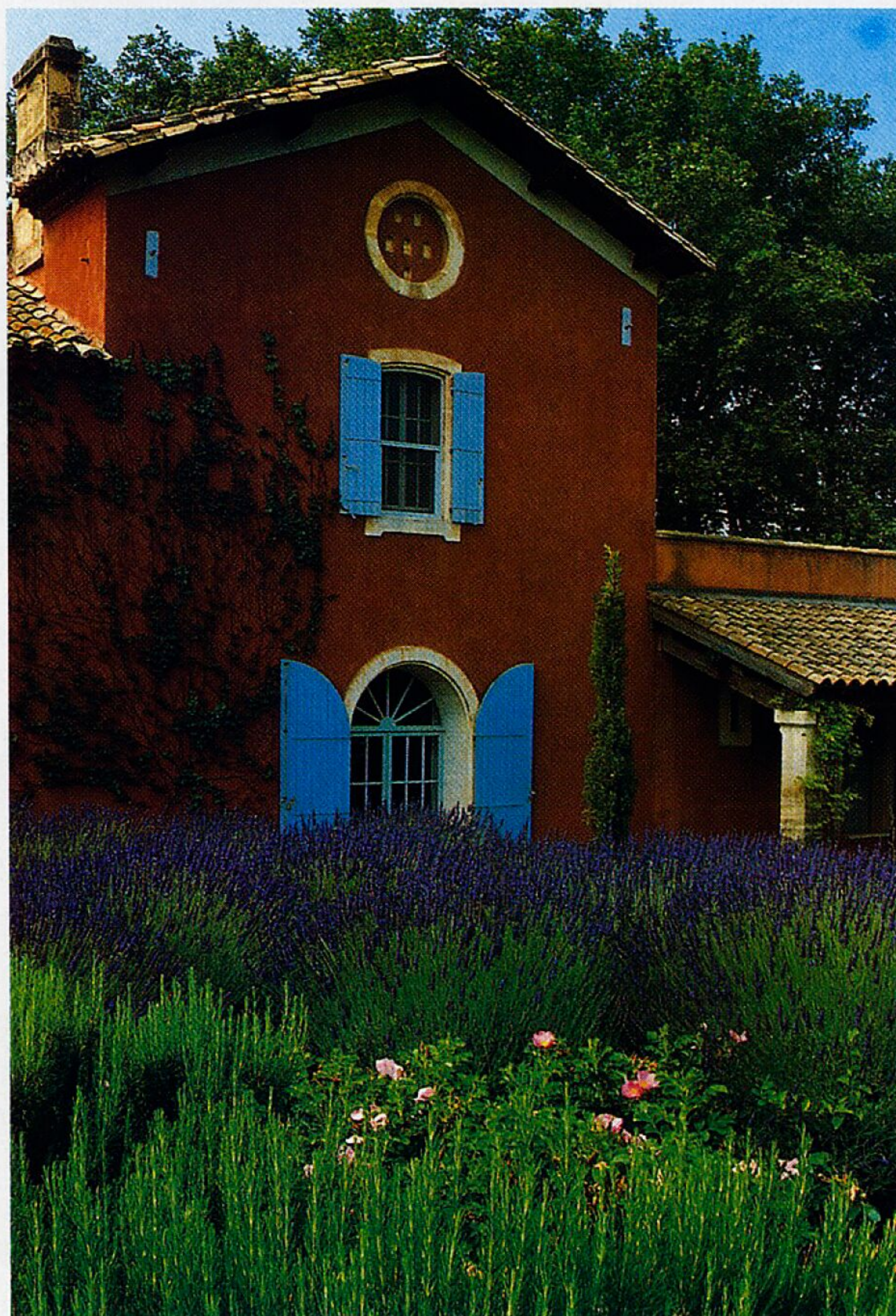
Dame de Salagon, near Forcalquier, and the other one is mine!

As an avid grower without a hundred or so hectares to play with, I was disappointed to find that there were no small gardens in the book. There are none of the little hidden places, that are crafted out of ruins or clinging to cliffs.

Neither are there any of the many villages with wonderful flowers tumbling over the ancient stones, up the side of steps and growing in tin cans – hanging baskets, for some reason, have never caught on here. I'd like to have read more about people like my neighbour, Monsieur Beton, for instance, whose *gazon* – carefully nurtured lawn – sports what must be the only gnome in the South.

Then there are those of the lunatic fringe, like the woman in Bonnieux who has carved an English cottage garden out of the flinty hillside, complete with verdant green turf. A friend who offered to house-sit for her while she was away was handed a 16-page dossier of what to water when. Perhaps Ms Jones can be persuaded to do a second volume, covering the less prominent, but equally interesting, smaller gardens.

Hazel Evans





PLANTS IN GARDEN HISTORY

by Penelope Hobhouse

Pavilion, £40

The exquisitely pretty cover – from a formal study of flowers by Girolamo Pini, 1614 – belies the seriousness of Penelope Hobhouse's new book. She sets out to bridge the gap between the plantsman and the garden designer, and to discover and document the extent to which the introduction of new plants influenced garden styles and gardening philosophy. Were plant novelties generally just slotted into conventional layouts and treated as collector's items or were they deliberately integrated into gardens, thus contributing to the evolution of design concepts?

The answers are not simple. Different periods had different priorities. In the course of her ambitious investigations, Hobhouse provides an analysis of the forms and content of Western gardens from earliest times to the present day. This is a huge undertaking, since European gardens have evolved from those laid out in the Mediterranean basin more than 3,000 years ago. The first known records of a garden layout is from a model in an Egyptian tomb around 2,000 BC; the oldest written description of a garden, also from an Egyptian tomb, is a thousand years earlier than that, and the earliest known representation of a rose is at Knossos.

The great service this book provides is to bring together from every period and many cultures a vast collection of quotations, information and illustrations from letters, legal documents, treaties, architectural drawings, botanical and medical codices, herbals, plant-lists, gardening manuals, illuminated manuscripts, tapestries and literature. Material normally available only to the

narrowly-focused scholar and specialist is juxtaposed and summarized.

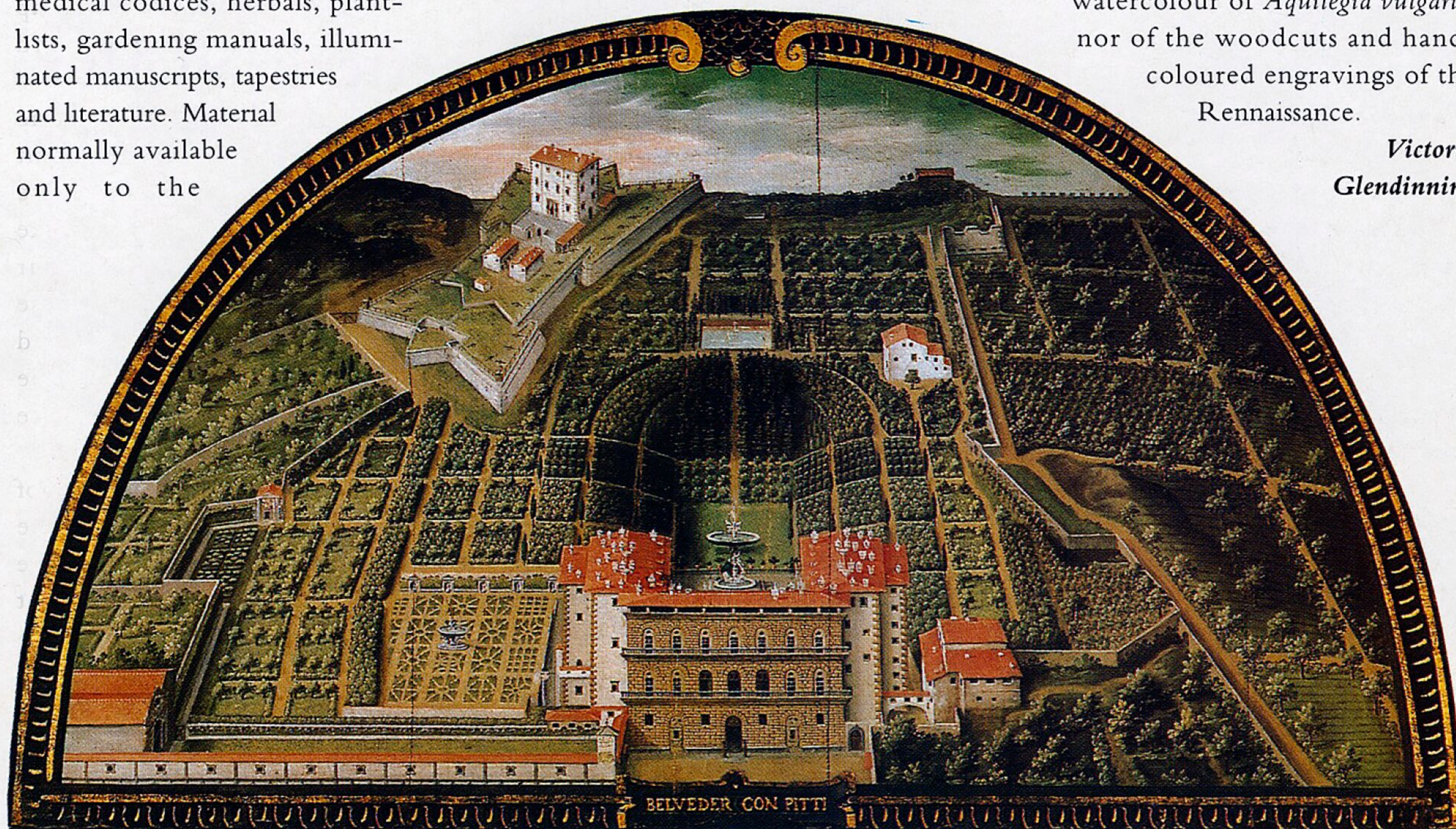
This is a formidable undertaking, but Hobhouse attains her own perspective. John Gerard, of the famous *Herball* for example, is put in his place as having "assumed an importance far beyond his true significance."

We too are put in our place. The late 20th-century garden is characterized by Hobhouse as concerned chiefly with conservation and ecology, but there has been an impoverishment. There are, for example, far fewer pelargonium hybrids available now than there were a century ago. By the 1830s, writes Hobhouse, almost all identifiable garden styles had been tried. From the eclecticism of the late 19th century onwards, garden design in Europe and the United States has relied on loose adaptations of the three or four basic design movements that she documents. Post-modernism, one could say, reached gardening sooner than it reached architecture or literature.

There is so much information crammed into this book that it is not exactly an easy read. It is basically a reference book in narrative form, and as such invaluable. The bibliography and source notes in themselves constitute research tools for readers who wish to double-dig. What makes the book additionally and irresistibly desirable, however, are the illustrations – unnumbered hundreds of them, beautifully reproduced. They provoke sobering thoughts about how little modern technologies have improved either our realisation of the 'bones' of a garden or our perception of plants. The charm of early garden plants and botanical illustrations may well lie in their *naïveté*. But no photograph could carry the aesthetic charge or improve on the accuracy of Durer's

watercolour of *Aquilegia vulgaris*, nor of the woodcuts and hand-coloured engravings of the Renaissance.

Victoria
Glendinning



What's in a name?

REFERENCE BOOKS COMPARED

We often use plant names like a form of shorthand which has little real meaning. We learn the word chrysanthemum at an early age but we have no more idea of what the word means than we do of the name chamaerops.

Learning without understanding is always a battle but there are several excellent reference books which make sense of this fascinating subject.

Professor William Stearn's **Dictionary of Plant Names for Gardeners** (Cassell, £16.99)

is the third incarnation of *A Gardener's Book of Plant Names*, published 30 years ago. Over the years, students have depended on it and serious gardeners have had trouble deciding whether to keep it in the potting shed or on the bookshelf.

Now this modestly priced edition makes the fruits of Professor Stearn's many years of meticulous research available to everyone – and in a form which is accessible even to gardeners fiercely prejudiced against botanical names.

The book contains two different sorts of information

in one alphabetical list. First there are the generic names gardeners most frequently come across with explanations of what they mean. So we discover that chrysanthemum derives from the Greek meaning gold flower, and relates directly to those yellow-flowered Mediterranean annuals to which the name originally referred.

Turning to the palm chamaerops, Professor Stearn reveals that chamae derives from the Greek meaning ground, or dwarf, while rhops means bush. The specific name of the species

Chamaerops humilis invariably tells us something useful. Looking up *humilis* we discover it means lower growing than its close relations – and indeed this is the most dwarf of all the palms.

This new edition has promptly moved in alongside *The Plant Finder*, *Hillier's Manual* and Graham Thomas's *Perennial Garden Plants* on my 'everyday' shelf and is proving just as valuable.

The Names of Plants by D. Gledhill (CUP, £8.95, paperback) covers much the same ground but in a less comprehensive way. It also



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gives the meanings of generic and specific names but this is more selective and rarely gives more than a line to each entry. While this has been a useful standby for some years, Stearn's comprehensive and scholarly but no less easy-to-follow book is such a good price (the hard-back of Gledhill costs £22.50) that it has to be the choice.

In the back of Stearn's book there is a 30 page list of common names and their botanical equivalents. This is taken to the ultimate extreme in **Know Your Common Plant Names** by

Brian Davis and Brian Knapp (MDA, £10.99). This consists of a two way cross-reference between botanical and common names.

There is nothing on meaning, but it will tell you *Hibiscus syriacus* is known as the Rose of Sharon. But I thought *Hypericum calycinum* was the Rose of Sharon; check back and yes it is, but it is also Aaron's Beard. I thought that was a verbascum; check back, no that is Aaron's rod, which also turns out to be another name for Solidago. But I thought that was Golden Rod... I think you get the idea.

There are some bizarre examples like the mind-boggling Rubber Rabbit Bush. This turns out to be *Chrysothamnus nauseosus*, a shrub so obscure that Hillier does not list it. Then you realise this book not only covers established names of garden plants but British wild flowers, species from around the world which are not grown here, plus names recently invented to sell plants in garden centres.

Examples relating to plants not actually grown in Britain seem rather pointless even if it is interesting to find

plants called Ramgoat Rose, Wampee and three different plants called Supple Jack.

If this book dissuades people from calling trillium by its botanical name, rather than Trinity Flower, it will have done a great disservice. On the other hand, if it helps people realise that if some idiot tries to sell them a Wig Tree, and what they are being proffered is in fact *Cotinus coggygria*, this book will have served a most useful purpose.

Unfortunately, pages started to fall out of my copy after only ten days use.

Graham Rice

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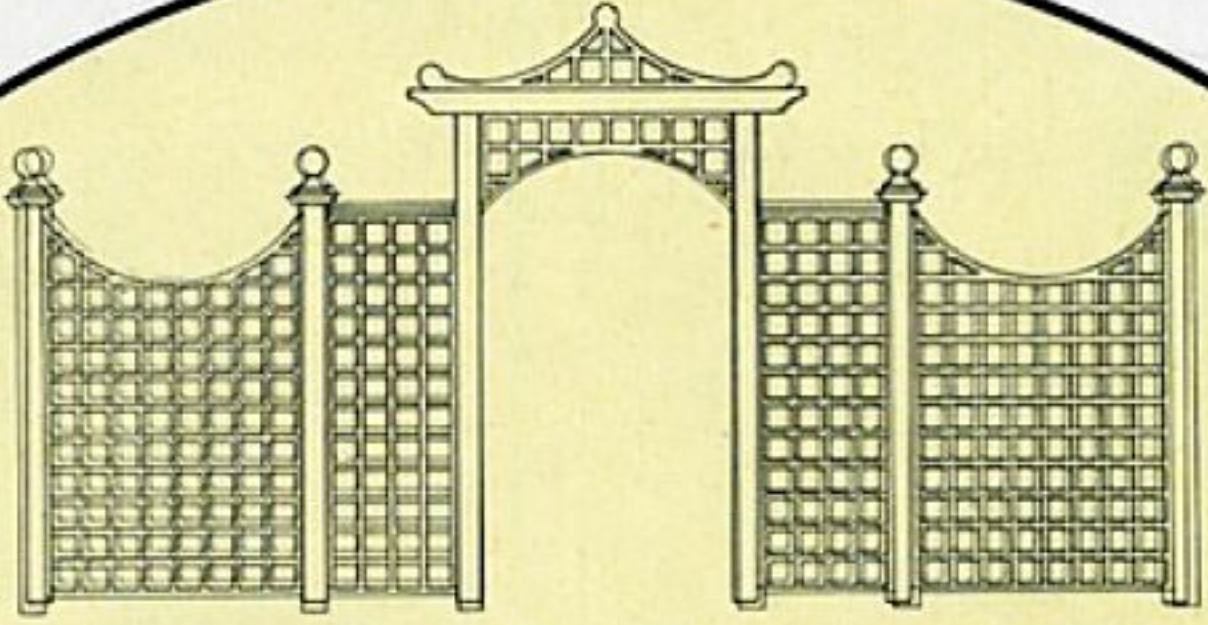
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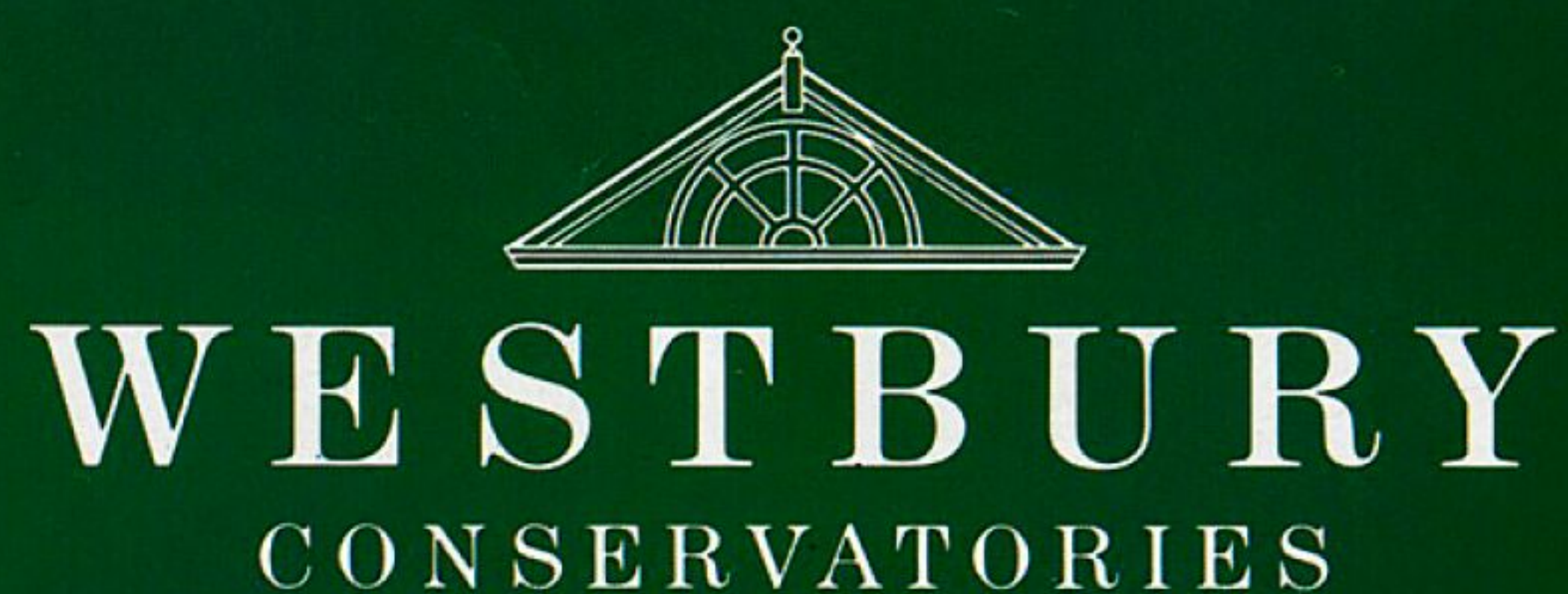
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On Tour

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MOUNTAIN AIR

Botanist, John Main, will be leading a Swan Hellenic Tour to enjoy the alpine flowers in the Swiss Engadine from June 15-22. Cost £1,150, plus single supplement. There is also a departure to the Dolomites on June 21 to see gentians, anemones, orchids and saxifrages. For details tel 071 931 1234.

RENAISSANCE ITALY

Edward Saunders is leading a group visiting private gardens in Urbino and the Marche from June 18-25, costing

£1,630. It includes the wonders of Villa Imperiale at Pesaro and the beautifully preserved Giardino Buonaccorsi at Potenza Picena. For details contact Fine Art Travel Ltd, 15 Saville Row, London W1X 1AE. Tel 071 437 8553.

LAKESIDE VILLAS

Voyages Jules Verne are offering a joint holiday programme with The National Trust. In May a seven night holiday costing £789 leaves for the Italian lakes. Visits include the Villa Favorita, the water and

Japanese garden of the Villa Melzi d'Eril, Villa Taranto sometimes called the 'Kew' of Italy and Isola bella on the Borromean Islands. Departure dates: May 1 (National Trust Members only); May 8 and 22. Tel 071 723 6556.

SICILIAN ORCHIDS

The Great Orchid Hunt's guided walking trips, organised by The Alternative Travel Group, start in Sicily and move north to Moniti Sibillini, on the Gargano Peninsula. Trips start on April 3 and depart at weekly intervals with the last leaving on

June 5. The Sicilian trip costs £675. On previous trips 30 to 40 different orchids have been noted. For details tel 0865 310399.

MAKING THE Lincs

Dave Sayers organises garden tours all over the world but on June 17-20 he will be giving guided tours of his own garden in Lincolnshire. Included is a visit to TV garden personality, Nigel Colborn's garden at Careby Manor, the Orchard Nurseries and the Valley Clematis Nursery. Four days costs £227. Tel 0673 885388.

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Invitations

Gardens Illustrated takes great pleasure in giving subscribers to the magazine the opportunity to take part in a variety of exclusive horticultural events and special offers.

HYDE HALL IN ESSEX

In association with **The Royal Horticultural Society**, Gardens Illustrated would like to invite you to visit this new and exciting garden which is already being called The Wisley of the West.

The gardens at Hyde Hall have been created by Dr Richard Robinson and his wife Helen over the past 30 years. Trees filter the strong coastal winds and there is always a threat of drought in this part of Essex which has very low rainfall. The Robinsons have managed to doctor the soil in the Woodland Garden so that they can even grow camellias, rhododendrons and magnolias in conditions that would otherwise be too alkaline.

The 24-acre garden satisfies every



interest. There are water features, kitchen gardens, roses and rock gardens, and wonderful shrubs, including the National Collection of viburnums. Hyde Hall is envied for its stately fox-tail lilies, *Eremurus robustus*, which seed naturally among the borders. There are a variety of

glasshouses and a plant centre.

Our visit to Hyde Hall takes place on Saturday April 24. A luxury Crusader Coach will leave from Bressenden Place, Victoria, at 9.15am to arrive at Hyde Hall at 11am. Coffee is followed by a short talk and tour of the garden. After lunch at 1pm there is the garden to explore and plants can be bought at the plant centre. We leave for London at 4pm, arriving around 5.30pm.

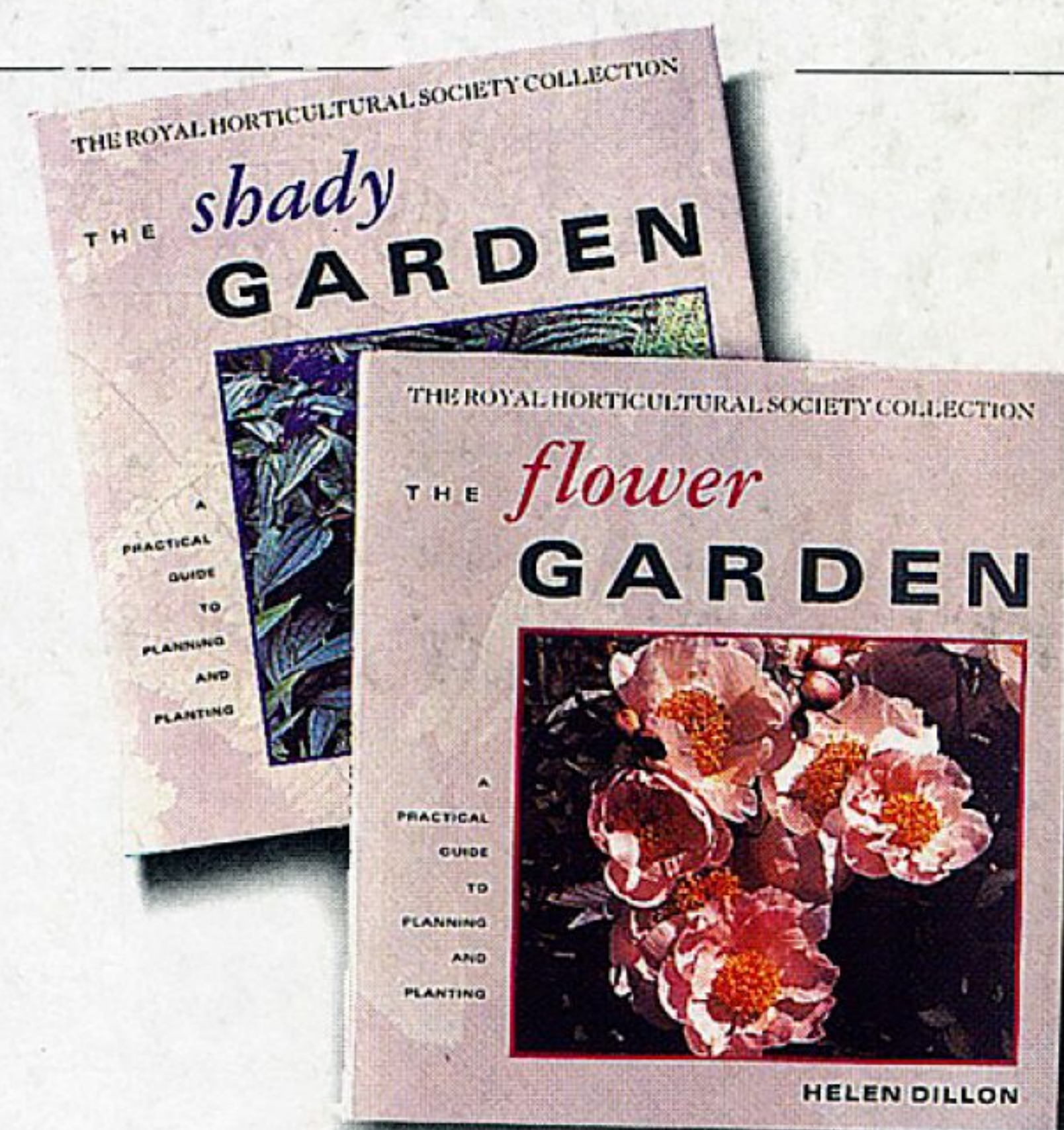
The all-inclusive cost of this day at Hyde Hall is £35, and unfortunately numbers are limited. Your cheque made out to John Brown Publishing Ltd, should be sent to **Gardens Illustrated Hyde Hall Offer**, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, London SW6 6LU.

If you join The Royal Horticultural Society now, you should still be in time to book your tickets for the members' days at The Chelsea Flower Show in May. Normally membership costs £22 plus £5 first year enrolment. We are offering Gardens Illustrated readers RHS membership plus one of two 'Royal Horticultural Society Collection' hardback titles: *The Flower Garden* by Helen Dillon or *The Shady Garden* by Jane Taylor, just published by Conran Octopus, which normally cost £15.95 each.

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Please tick box for either ☐ *The Flower Garden* by Helen Dillon or ☐ *The Shady Garden* by Jane Taylor. Please send coupon and cheque for £35 made payable to The Royal Horticultural Society to Membership Department, P O Box 313, Vincent Square, SW1P 2PE. Code 224.

These are just two of the many special offers available to readers of Gardens Illustrated.

To ensure you are able to take advantage of limited availability offers fill out the subscription coupon on page 126.

Classic Tools

Gardening equipment designed to stand the test of time, selected by Elizabeth Dickson

Photographs by James Mortimer

There is something intensely personal about any kind of tool, and the best pieces of gardening equipment, like watering cans and cloches, are often passed down from generation to generation. A good gardener – like Mr John Teevan, who runs the garden at Fenton House, the location used for these photographs – takes as much pride in his tool shed as he does in his tomatoes or tulips.

Tools like spades and forks will undoubtedly give better service if you look after them well – cleaning forks and spades after digging keeps them sharp and rust free. If your tools are made of ordinary steel, as opposed to stainless steel, pushing them in a bucket of sand, soaked in car oil, will do the job in minutes. Remember garden forks are the cause of many accidents. The most usual is people impaling their

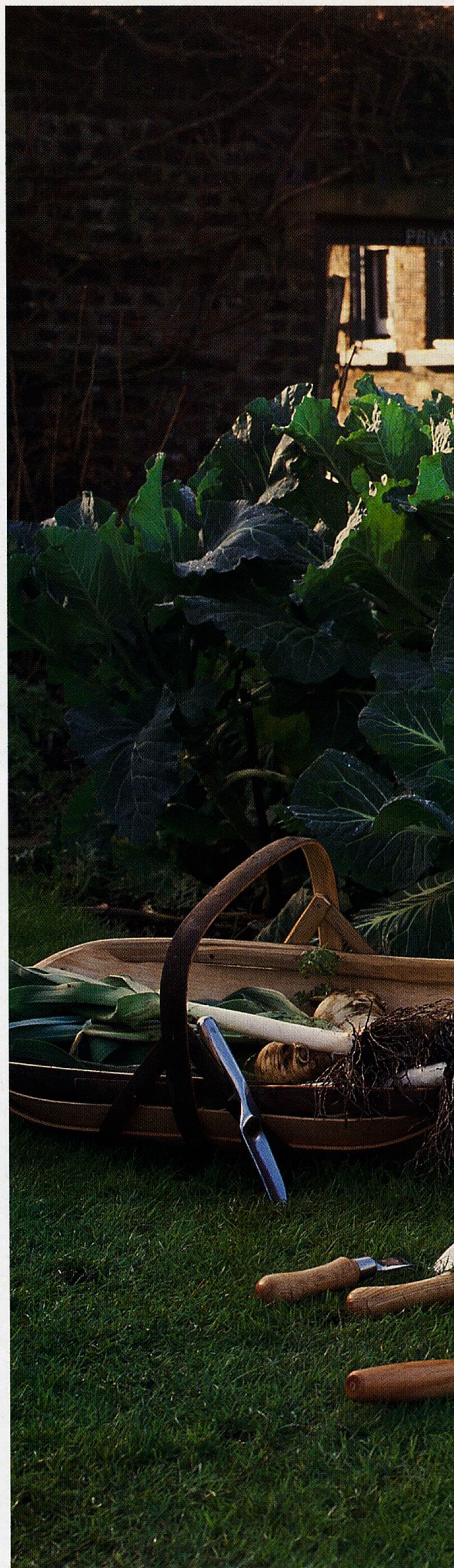
foot with a fork, particularly dangerous when the gardener is not wearing sensibly stout shoes.

Fenton House is celebrating its tercentenary from June 7-14. During that week there will be a programme of events taking place to celebrate Fenton House's 300-year history. Funds are also needed to keep this lovely house in mint condition.

A series of colourful, costumed events have been organised for which pre-booking is essential. For the tercentenary brochure and booking form, please write to the Tercentenary Organiser, 34 Fortune Green Road, West Hampstead, London NW6 1UJ.

Fenton House, (NT) Hampstead Grove, London NW3. Tel 071 435 3471. Open March weekends 2-6, April to Oct weekends and Bank Holidays 11-6 and Mon-Wed 1-7. Entry to house and gardens £3.

In the cabbage patch. Trug by Southdown Trugs, three sizes from £22 to £48.85; Odell stainless steel trowel, £7.95; all from Clifton Nurseries. The Victorian style cloche costs £108.50 (inc p&p) from Specialised Designs Ltd. The digging spade and fork, in solid stainless steel with ash shaft and handle, £80 each. (See border spade and fork offer, page 123). In the foreground: daisy picker, hand cultivator, hand trowel and fork, £9.95 each; terracotta seed tray Windsor Collection, £18.95 (£21.95 inc p&p); all from The Garden Studio. The Sandvik shears, £21.40 from The Chelsea Gardener. Old flowerpots, £2 each or 5 for £9 from Stephen Long Antiques (For suppliers' addresses, see page 126).











Easy to handle: (from left to right) Traditional Wessex broom, £5.65, wooden hay rake £14.95 and birch besom, £9.85, all from Clifton Nurseries; two heather besoms (£4.95) and corn brooms, £7.40 each, all from The Garden Studio; Bulldog yellow, wooden-handled cultivator £16.99 from Clifton Nurseries; Cape Cod weeder, as used by generations of New England gardeners, £14.99 (inc p&p) from Traditional Garden Supply Company; Spear and Jackson Dutch hoe, rake and draw hoe, £13.99 each; McGuire's bamboo rake, £8.99 and Spear and Jackson springbok metal rake, £14.99, all from Clifton Nurseries; antique, Gertrude Jekyll-style, wicker rose basket, £55 from Stephen Long Antiques.



Everything in its place and a place for everything: (from top left) Burgon and Ball Master shiny steel hand-shears, ideal for topiary and soft pruning, £16.25. Bulldog stainless steel border fork and spade, £90.73; Bulldog 'Premier Series' wooden-handled carbon steel edger, £19.95 from Chelsea Gardener; Bulldog springbok rake, £14.95 from Clifton Nurseries.

In the foreground: Secateurs by Felco, three sizes, from £29.65; Sandvik long-handled tree-lopper £31.50; Spear and Jackson 'County Range' border fork and spade in green livery, £21.99 each, all from Clifton Nurseries. Sandvik parrot-bladed loppers, £32.65 from The Chelsea Gardener; trug with blue rim, £25 from The Conran Shop; metal hand trowel with wooden handle, £4.99 from branches of Homebase.



The style is in the can: on the shelf, metal can with brass rose made in France, £24.25; Haws Professional, long-spouted galvanised can, £28.70; both from The Conran Shop. Copper can with solid brass trim, £115.00 from Marston & Langinger. Copy of a galvanised can used by Vita Sackville-West, £36.50 (two sizes) by Recollections and Renwick & Clarke Trading Ltd. Haw's houseplant-sized brass can, £19.95 from Clifton Nurseries. Tinplate can from Greece, £26.40 from Graham & Green.



Influence Abroad

Penelope Hobhouse visits a young
English gardener who has put rainbows into an
exceptional garden outside New York, USA

Photographs by Mick Hales



The flower garden near the house at Stonecrop is unique. It owes its originality in planting and vibrant colour sequences to the English manager and head horticulturist Caroline Burgess. Caroline has spent eight years working in the garden that Frank and Anne Cabot first laid out at Cold Spring in the Hudson Valley, north of New York in the 1950s.

Stonecrop was part of Anne's

family's property and Frank began his gardening there. His first specialist enthusiasm was for alpine in raised beds. Gradually his attention extended to woodland gardening and then to designing a large lake surrounded by local rock shelving. Today much of the outer garden still bears the stamp of his innovative design concepts and range of plant knowledge, but he mainly gardens on the St Lawrence river north of Quebec.

For many years, while Frank developed the alpine beds and wilder outer spaces, different helpers had managed the more domestic flower and kitchen areas, the style adopted reflecting conventional east-coast taste with curving flowerbeds planted with drifts of reliably hardy iris, peonies and day lilies.

A katsura, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, and a sugar maple, *Acer saccharum*, were planted to shelter

the south of the house. Another maple and a rare snowdrop tree, *Halesia monticola* 'Vestita', with formal apple trees shaped the arrival courtyard. The enclosed area beyond – known sometimes as the 'Inner Sanctum', where vegetables and autumn flowering chrysanthemums grew in lattice work beds – was enclosed by a low cedar fence.

To Caroline, improving the gardens near the house became an immediate challenge. An earlier visit had made her familiar with the aspect. The house lies 1,100 feet above sea level with winter temperatures frequently falling to ten degrees (F) below freezing. The site was originally open fields inhospitably dotted with glacial boulders. Before any gardening was possible, many of the rough unworkable stones had to be removed and replaced with good topsoil – hence the name 'Stonecrop'.

The aspect of the garden limits

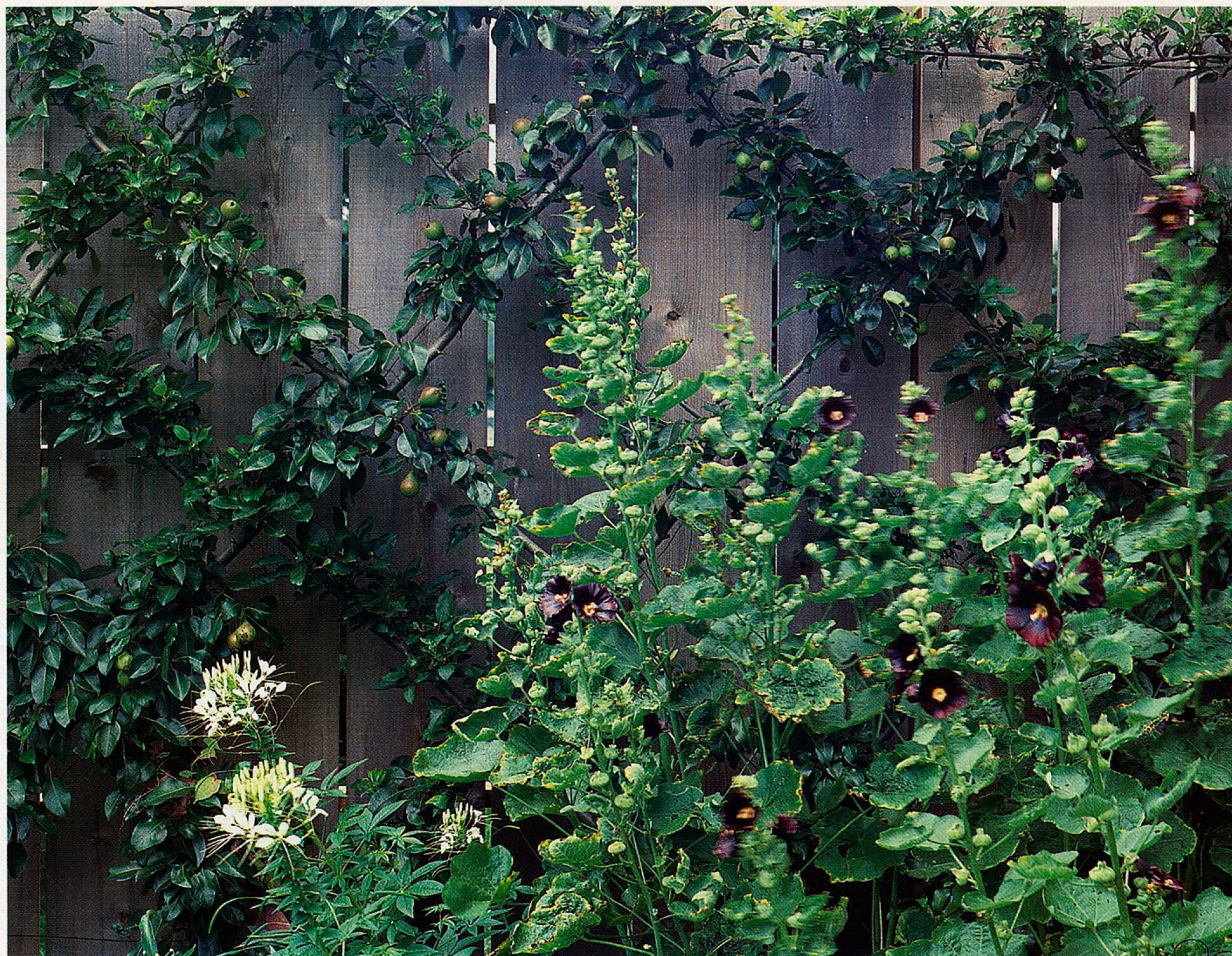
Above: Caroline Burgess and Frank Cabot. Right: Looking down onto the 'Inner Sanctum' showing the rectangular and square beds, which are defined by closely mown paths and filled with a highly-organised 'chaos' of colour. The curious wooden figure of Miss Gertrude Jekyll, dressed in burlap stuffed with 'salt' hay, casts an approving eye over plants in every colour of the rainbow.





Colour spills from the beds onto the main cross paths of the Inner Sanctum: on the left, pink phlox, purple, self-seeding *Malva sylvestris* ssp. *mauritiana*, *Cirsium rivulare* and annual *Limonium simulatum* 'Royal Purple'. Dusky-leaved atriplex gives way to planting of silvery artemisias and grey-leaved helichrysums, salmon achilleas and scarlet bergamots. The view is terminated by a bold stand of perennial plume poppy *Macleaya cordata* with half hardy *Verbena* 'Lawrence Johnson' and the brown-leaved grass *Carex buechananii* in the foreground. On the south side, yellow-flowered ligularias act as a foil to the paler *Anthemis* 'Wargrave Variety' and annuals such as bells of Ireland *Molucella laevis*, yellow limonium and white cleomes. The wooden quadripods, designed and made by Franklin Faust, support a pale pink sweet pea and golden hop *Humulus lupulus* 'Aureus'.





Above: Behind the south border, near the house, is a diamond-patterned 'Belgian Fence', which is a mix of trained apples and pears. Black-flowered hollyhocks *Alcea rugosa* 'Nigra' and *Cleome serrulata* 'Helen Campbell' have a softening effect in the borders. The bleached cedar-board fencing frames the flower garden enclosure, providing a backdrop for clematis, annual sweet peas *Lathyrus odoratus* and half-hardy *Eccremocarpus scaber*, otherwise known as the Chilean glory vine.

the range of broad-leaved evergreen shrubs; favourites such as choisyas, osmanthus and winter-flowering *Viburnum tinus* are out of the question. A blanket of snow protects dormant herbaceous plants through the cold months, while hot summers, with temperatures often in the mid-nineties, are perfect for late annuals.

Caroline Burgess first visited Stonecrop for six weeks in the summer of 1983 and returned a year later, having gained a Kew

Diploma with honours. As a young girl, she had previously worked for Rosemary Verey at Barnsley House, learning the names of plants. At twenty she returned to Barnsley and helped Mrs Verey lay out her knot garden, herb beds and the beginnings of the French style *potager*.

Recognising Caroline's potential, Mrs Verey encouraged her to complete A levels and gain a place on the Kew programme. At that time she became acquainted with Valerie Finnis (Lady Scott), the

alpine expert, and many weekends were spent at the Dower House at Boughton in Northamptonshire, weeding with her and her husband, Sir David Scott.

When Caroline, a real perfectionist, eventually returned to Stonecrop, she knew the first essential was to improve the soil condition by double-digging. All perennials were removed and stored while this was completed. Today, the well-worked loam, although still overlying a hard pan of clay, is



Above: The yellow and green section of the rainbow bed, with splashings of white, is dominated by an espaliered cat's cradle made with intertwined small-leaved limes *Tilia cordata*. On the right, in the foreground, snakeroot *Cimicifuga racemosa* flowers over a group of elegant lilies *Lilium* 'French Vanilla' and silvery *Artemisia* 'Moonshine'. Behind the evening primroses *Oenothera biennis* and *Lysimachia ciliata*, glimmers the brighter yellow of the biennial woad *Isatis tinctoria*, almost outshining a rare heracleum *Heracleum antasiaticum*. On the left of the path, lady's mantle *Alchemilla mollis*, variegated liriope and *Chrysanthemum maximum* 'Little Princess' extend the yellow, white and green motif.

annually enriched with home-made compost and farmyard manure. This provides welcome humus and nutrients for many of the greedy seasonal plants – labour intensive perennials, biennials and annuals which are the *raison d'être* of the beds in this enclosed flower garden.

Before deciding on colour schemes and choosing plants to complete her visionary pictures, Caroline also realised the importance of re-introducing order to the existing layout, which would give a

strong background framework to summer flowers. She straightened curvaceous edges, levelled lawns, and created strong axial lines and new vistas between the main flowerbeds – schemes splendidly in keeping with the French style architecture of the house.

Caroline then closed in the views by raising the height of the cedar fences around the old vegetable garden. This screened unsightly roof lines beyond the perimeter and introduced effective vertical features

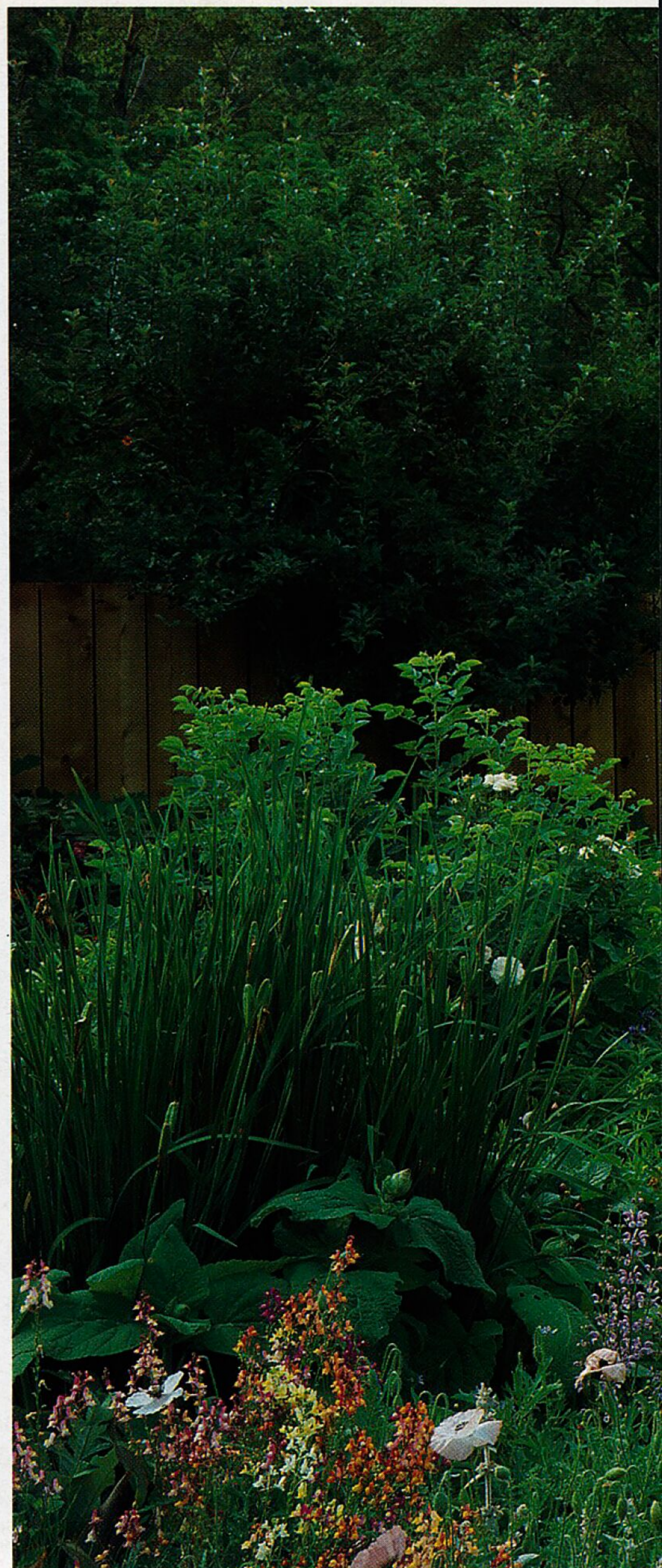
which contrast with billowing plant growth and compliment soaring plant shapes. Four of Franklin Faust's elegant wooden quadripods placed in the centre of the main squares, define the vistas from different viewpoints. Elsewhere, his trellis-work fences mark divisions.

Having improved the soil and got the 'bones' organised, she planted as informally as possible, using a vast range of both hardy and tender perennials, biennials and annuals, mainly for summer effects. In this



enclosed area, Caroline concentrated on distinctive colour and plant themes which cover the ground in peaks and troughs of colour. She says she got her inspiration from the colourful sub-tropical planting at Tresco Abbey in the Scilly Isles and Brian Halliwell's elaborate and innovative bedding schemes at Kew where he was Assistant Curator. At Stonecrop, no-one can pretend that the varied planting is not labour intensive. Roses, hardy shrubs and rustling grasses are used to structure each bed. Favourite shrubs for the

climate include hibiscus, sambucus, philadelphus, *Viburnum x burkwoodii* and *Prunus cistena*. Climbers such as clematis, annual *Eccremocarpus scaber*, *Cobaea scandens*, nasturtiums and sweet peas clothe walls and frames. It is these plants, grown for flower and foliage, which give the garden 'a cutting edge'. Even when finally planted out, after the last predicted frost around May 15, these fast-growing seasonal plants need attentive care. They are continually dead-headed and manicured to allow a 'wild' yet tutored effect.



Although a plantswoman with a deep interest in the rare and unusual, Caroline uses the plants, not to make a collection, but as tools to establish carefully thought out 'seasons' of peak performance and add colour from July until the severe frosts of autumn. Cold winters prevent early flowering of the many bulbs which perform for us, but as snow melts in March, aconites, *Anemone blanda*, *A. appenina*, crocus, pusckinias and scillas come into bloom. Lily-flowered tulips such as 'White



Triumphator', 'Jacqueline' and 'Queen of Sheba' also manage to battle through.

In June, species and shrub roses – rather than highly bred modern types – fill the garden with scent and colour. In July, sensational lilies, both species and hybrids, complement colour schemes. From the end of June, perennials and annuals cover bare earth, twine up frames and spill over the grass paths. In the extreme heat perennial flowers fade quickly, so annuals and foliage plants have essential roles. Some annuals,

Top Left: The central square of 'colour' beds is dominated by a large *Arundo donax*, lifted and protected every winter. Silvery *Artemisia arborescens*, white leaved *Senecio leucostachys* and bronze-leaved fennel *Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum' tone down the vibrant colours. Bottom Left: Carefully sited trees and grey cedar fences frame the view at Stonecrop. An indigenous broad-headed sugar maple *Acer saccharum*, grows 'in' the wooden deck outside the house. Dark-

leaved *Perilla frutescens* 'Crispa', acts as a foil to silvery helichrysum and feathery fennel. Tobacco plants and large-leaved *Lepechinia salviae* syn. *L. subhastata*, flower until the first frosts. In England, perilla generally flowers too late to produce ripe seed but the rare lepechinia, given a warm sunny situation, will provide easily germinated seed for the following season. Above: Franklin Faust's wooden quadripods give height in the beds as well as support for many climbing plants.

such as cupheas, with tiny, funnel-shaped flowers, perform for five successive months with little attention; others, especially compositae need frequent dead-heading, while calocassias, cannas, dahlias, eupatoriums, lepechinias and salvias carry the flag into autumn.

From July to October, colours hold the garden together. There are blending pastels in the three main borders that frame the house; a vista to the east along the enclosed garden wall has the golden-foliaged *Philadelphus coronarius* 'Aureus' with yellow dornicums, lilies and *Nicotiana langsdorfii*, set off by blue salvias which along with many others of this genus, thrive in the hot summers.

There are several entrances to this retreat. One narrow archway, curtained with the sweet autumn clematis, *Clematis maximowicziana*, leads through the cool white garden which prepares the eye for more riotous hues. Grass paths separate lattice-work, square and rectangular beds, each devoted to a colour scheme. Deeper colours give way to filmy greys and silvers in the centre. At the southern end of the enclosure, that most famous garden colourist, Miss Gertrude Jekyll, fashioned from wood and clothed in burlap, watches over a rainbow circle where reds, oranges, yellows, green, blues and violets blend to make a colour spectrum.

Fortunately, there are considerable backup facilities at Stonecrop; besides the alpine houses and

covered beds, polytunnels and propagating sheds facilitate plant production and provide adequate storage space.

The gardening 'season' at Stonecrop begins in June when biennials are sown to flower the following year. From June until September, cuttings are rooted and established in their own pots before the winter, and seeds are collected and dried. By October, to ensure against losses, three of each specimen plant are potted up to overwinter in one of the greenhouses.

Caroline Burgess has brought many skills to Stonecrop, not least her invisible but tangible qualities of management. "From day one, Frank has never interfered," she says, enabling her to plan and motivate her team of helpers. Last year the whole garden became a charitable foundation, called Stonecrop Gardens Inc. and Caroline was made the director.

With its future secure due to an adequate endowment, the garden looks set to develop and grow. A seed list is available to Stonecrop members, but access at present remains by appointment only. In the meantime, as pressure grows to take on extra help each season, Caroline has exciting plans to turn this magical twenty acre garden into a school for practical gardeners. 🍷

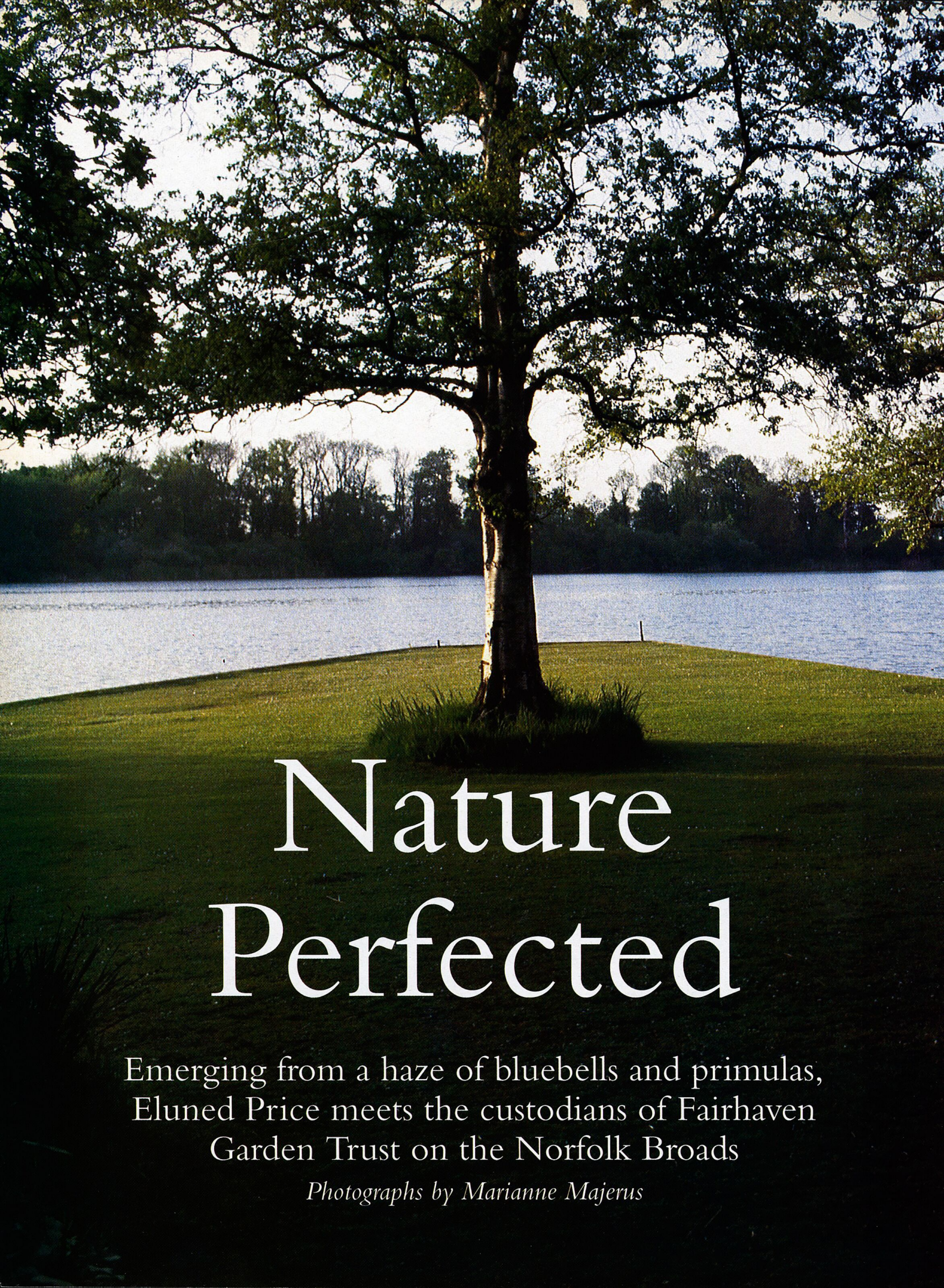
Visits to Stonecrop may only be made by appointment. Stonecrop, RR # Box 371, Cold Spring, N.Y. 10516. Tel (914) 265 2000.

This view looking out towards the landscape was taken soon after Caroline had erected the new cedar fence. Dividing the garden into definite sections, each one hidden from the next, has increased the feeling of overall space, while at the same time giving more seclusion.

The mixed planting of pale-flowered perennials and annuals, cimicifugas, *Monarda* 'Snow White', peach-leaved campanulas and rampant tender *Verbena peruviana* 'Alba' is set off by grey and silver-leaved plants such as *Stachys byzantina* on the right.







Nature Perfected

Emerging from a haze of bluebells and primulas,
Eluned Price meets the custodians of Fairhaven
Garden Trust on the Norfolk Broads

Photographs by Marianne Majerus



Swallows and Amazons country: The view from the thatched boathouse, looking over the peaceful waters of South Walsham's inner broad, towards Ranworth.



Do not be deceived: the art of natural gardens lies in their management. The careless copse whose floor is a lapis lazuli mosaic of bluebells, the apparent insouciance of the meandering stream was not delivered, perfect and complete, by Mother Nature unaided. The birth of natural gardens depends, for a healthy and continued existence, on the midwifery and nursing skills of man without whose interventions the bluebells would be swamped by brambles and the water by algae. Nowhere are these management skills so vital as in the woodland and water gardens; nowhere are they so brilliantly deployed as in The Fairhaven Garden Trust at South Walsham in Norfolk.

The garden was made by the late Lord Fairhaven, then Major Henry Broughton, when he bought the estate just after the war. He must have been an extraordinary man, fired by a strong aesthetic sense and huge determination, for he worked for ten years to transform a wilderness into 30 acres of formal garden and 170 acres into a woodland garden, meshed with streams on the edge of a three-acre broad. "Those were the days before the JCB," recalls the present Lord Fairhaven. "It was all cleared and dug by hand." His father was very

selective in his workforce: "I was only allowed to pick up sticks. He very nearly destroyed my interest in gardening."

The late Lord Fairhaven ran his estate meticulously, with seven gardeners, two woodmen and himself. "If he said he'd meet you at 7am, he meant seven, not five past or five to," says George Debbage, who began as garden boy and is now Warden of the Trust. "There was one man for the kitchen garden, one for the orchid houses, one for the hothouses. Every Friday, the gravel drives had to be raked smooth and fresh plants were brought from the greenhouses to fill the bowls and a big old fashioned sledge at the Hall." With a passion for trees, Lord Fairhaven planted thousands. "He believed every tree you put in should live." The procedure was strictly adhered to. "While he watched we dug holes eight feet across and 18 inches deep. We built a little mound of leaf soil in the middle, sat the tree on top and draped the roots over the sides, placed manure around the sides – but not touching the roots – and filled in with compost and soil. Then Lord Fairhaven would straighten the tree as it was packed down."

Underlying the sort of strictness which only comes

A narrow planked path through the West Garden where candelabra primulas, *Primula pulverulenta*, thread their way through glossy skunk cabbage, *Lysichitum americanum*, under the shade of pussy willow, *Salix caprea*.



through the exertions of self-discipline, there was an inner gentleness. So much is evident from the touching loyalty with which Lord Fairhaven addressed the deaths of the family pets. A single stone marks the graveyard of six dogs and two cats. Each had its own funeral. The estate carpenter made the coffin, lined with cotton wool, a bunch of orchids was placed by the body and Lord Fairhaven conducted a short service.

There must have been a deeply romantic streak. How else to explain the fervour with which the land was reclaimed, not for tidy rows of bedding plants and the barren geometrical contortions which some call cultivation, but for the purpose of providing an arboreal idyll, throwing cobalt ribbons of bluebells about the shade of the beeches, bringing life to dank and boggy ground with carmine crowns of primulas, making a shelter for the pale sweet faces of primroses. Lord Fairhaven chose with an artist's eye just the right points for the clearings, creating configurations of streams, banks and boughs and glimpses of the long wide waters of the broad.

"He always said he didn't mind how long we took on a job as long as it was done properly," says George.

"It's a principle I've stuck to." More than that, Mr Debbage shares his late employer's vision, apparent in the way it is managed and renewed. He shares his grit and determination too. As Chairman of the Parish Council, he fought to save the village school from closure – now it has 90 thriving pupils – and he raised the money to build a village hall. Now he sits on the Broadlands District Council as an Independent: "You wouldn't get in there if you weren't."

George was 19 when he came to work on the estate as garden boy "doing everything everybody else didn't like doing." There were a lot of Debbages and Ebbages there then: Albert Ebbage the woodman, Reggie Debbage, George's father and his grandfather Charlie Debbage. There were other, unrelated Debbages, also woodmen and farm foremen. One of the gardeners bet George £1 he wouldn't last the year, possibly succumbing to the confusion. "I'm still here," he grins. Now there is only one under-gardener to help him, Harry Belton, and a YTS lad, James Bunn, whom George persuaded the Trustees to employ. "I want to train him as we were trained by Lord Fairhaven so that eventually we can pass on the priorities and methods."

Above: Lighting the woodland against a backdrop of butterbur, *Petasites alba*, and all manner of primulas from the dark red *P. pulverulenta* to pale pink *P. pulverulenta* 'Bartley' plus a profusion of *P. japonica* including *P. japonica* 'Miller's Crimson' and 'Potsford White'.

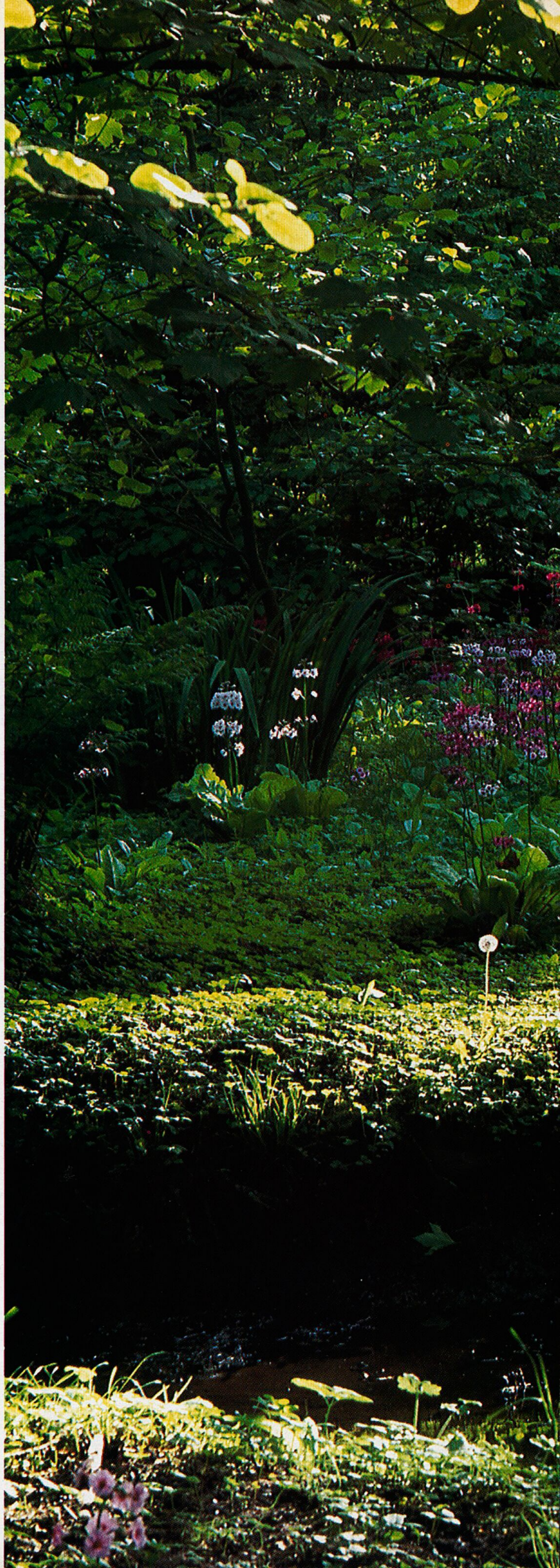
For six weeks from the beginning of February, George and Harry stand in the freezing dykes dredging and raking mud, leaves and sticks. They manage 250 yards a day each. George uses a crome, an old-fashioned Norfolk rake, which was his grandfather's. Even when all the raking and the mowing, the splitting and the sowing, the planting and the hedging has been done, there is still the wildlife to protect. If you are lucky you may catch a glimpse of the water deer, shy creatures with rough grey coats, no more than two feet high. "They run around like little dogs," says George. "Their feet are so sharp you'd think they'd sink in the alder carrs (boggy ground forested by alders), but they don't." A mallard makes her nest every year in the 900-year-old oak, eight feet up, and each year the babies would take off straight into the water. "There's been a nest every year since I've been here," says George. "It's a family tradition."

His management of the wildlife is non-intrusive but considerate, breaking the ice for the ducks in winter, clearing a patch of frosty ground. Cutting down old alders produces splendid new growth, "But we would never do it to all of them: the woodpeckers like the old ones too much." We walk on, admiring the thatched boathouse by the broad. "When we have a sandwich, we don't eat it all, you know," he says. "We share it with whoever is with us."

Lord Fairhaven made a bird sanctuary in the area surrounding the smaller broad. It was an oak forest until the arms race before the First World War when all the big estates were asked to give their oaks for ship-building. Now George has had the pleasure of replanting and seeing some 92 species of birds make their homes here. They do not confine themselves to the sanctuary. The cormorants prefer the larger Inner broad, taking the alder piles of the man-made island at its centre for a drying green, hanging their wings out to dry after a spot of fishing.

It is a magical place in every season. White wood anemones, violets and bluebells, yellow flag irises, cowslips and primroses decorate the spring, lilies and foxgloves supplant azaleas and camellias in the summer, and in the autumn, one wanton kick along a walk sends flying a thousand desiccated slivers of gold and amber and ruby from the beeches, maples, hornbeams and oaks. And in every season, the woodlands, criss-crossed with dykes, their watery reflections of the sky broken only by the importunate crossing of a coot or the swoop of a kingfisher, are charged by the innumerable varieties of primulas, shocking the shadowy glades with their spectra of nail-polish pinks. 🌸

The Narrow Bridge path where the bridge rails, cut from young alder, lead over one of the many dykes under the overhanging alder. Red *Primula pulverulenta* stand along the path.







*The Fairhaven Garden Trust, South Walsham, nr Norwich.
Tel 060549 449.*

*Opening times:
11-6 weekdays & Sundays, 2-6 Saturday.*

*Opening dates:
Easter week then Sundays & Bank Holidays until May 3.
May 5-Sept 26, Wednesday-Sunday inc plus Bank Holidays
Autumn Colours Day Sunday October 31 from 10-dusk.*

*Admissions:
£2 adult, £1.50 OAP, £1 child. Bird Sanctuary £1.*

*Walks with the Warden: Every Sunday in July at 2.30.
Prices include a cream tea: £4 adult, £3.50 OAP, £3 child.*

Plants for sale.

Above: The present Lord Fairhaven whose father created this magical woodland garden and bird sanctuary out of 200 acres of wilderness on the Norfolk Broads. His childhood gardening experiences were limited to picking up sticks.



Top: Bluebells crowd the bole of a beech in late spring.
 Left: *Gunnera manicata* unfurls its fleshy prickly-edged leaves under dappled sunlight.
 Right: A young ash frames a view of the inner broad from the Broads Walk.



Chisenbury Priory

Restoration Drama by Jamie Compton

Photographs by Tania Midgley

Above: Mary-Anne Robb emerges from the house she and her husband Alistair restored, after it was gutted by fire in 1981. Their exceptional garden has risen up around the house like a phoenix.

Right: *Rosa* 'Albertine' climbs the brick pillars of the gates, at the end of the herbaceous border. Here mounds of lime green *Alchemilla mollis* and blue *Nepeta* 'Six Hills Giant' anchor blue delphiniums. The gates lead through to the orchard, greenhouses and on to the wild garden.



Chisenbury Priory sits on the eastern side of the Avon valley, tucked beneath the rolling downland of the Salisbury Plain.

The house faces north to south, and the approach to the southerly Queen Anne facade is imposing, an elegant rectangle of soft red brick. Parts of Chisenbury date from the 11th century. Up until the 16th century, it was used as a residential cell for a much larger monastery nearby, then it became the property of a London hospital who would rent it out.

Since then it has been in private ownership, but little was done to the garden until this century. Old flint and clunch walls remain from earlier times. One owner, Lady Harvey, built strong brick walls to contain the leat, some 40 years ago and gardening continued at Chisenbury until the disastrous fire of 1981 which caused her to leave.

Alastair and Mary-Anne Robb have been at Chisenbury ever since. They moved into three scarcely habitable rooms and lived for the first year under a tarpaulin roof with the ever-present stench of burning in their nostrils. Now, having restored much of the house, they have more energy to devote outside. Alastair to the vineyard he planted nearby and the wine he makes and bottles on site. Mary-Anne to the garden where there is usually a melee of dogs, peacocks, cockatoo, bantams and family present at any one time.

Approaching the front door, the first impression is one of ebullient order, from the wide herbaceous borders backed by high walls either side of the lawn. I am biased in describing these, as my wife redesigned the borders three years ago.

Tania cleverly extended the season of interest, starting with *Euphorbia nicaeensis*, *Geranium clarkei* 'Kashmir White' interplanted with the dark-flowered *Allium* 'Purple Sensation' through the main herbaceous border season to end at aster time, and later when the seeds of the deep ruby purple-leaved *Cimicifuga simplex* 'Brunette' begin to set.

The back of the house looks onto the North Walled Garden which is surrounded by angled, tiled, copped walls. This area has a terrace at the top looking down a slope to the meandering leat above which on the western side grows a huge and ancient holm oak, *Quercus ilex*.

A path leading from the now derelict Justice Room, makes an L-shape across the terrace. The Robbs have made a pergola over the path and planted laburnum and yew to grow over it. Around their trunks in spring are

Right: The large, white-flowered climbing rose, *R.* 'Iceberg' is perfectly placed to catch the afternoon sun. It is growing on the west-facing wall, behind one of the herbaceous borders; in front, tall, blue delphiniums jostle among the spikes of acanthus.







Above: The leat on a still day in summer. The banks are lined with large, round leaves of moisture-loving plants like the umbrella plant *Darmera peltatum* and *Sanguisorba canadensis* with white, arching flower spikes, which appear in late summer.

delicate drifts of pale yellow tulips which grow through the carpeting alpinas. Steps lead down from the terrace but on either side is a west-facing mixed border, designed by Rupert Golby. In it are some fine plants such as ground-covering *Campanula punctata* as well as the marvellous maroon-flowered oriental poppy named 'Patty's Plum' by Nori Pope after Patricia Marrow.

At one end is a splendid *Staphylea colchica*, an underrated spring-flowering shrub. Still on the terrace, near the steps, is a copse of *Prunus* 'Ukon' underplanted with 3,000 white *Crocus vernus* and other spring bulbs.

Up against the house, in a sheltered west-facing bed, is a large clump of *Dracunculus vulgaris*, the infamous dragon arum. In May, this plant sends up a huge velvety blackish-red flower which stinks of

rotting meat to attract flies for pollination. The Robbs have a seat near this corner and frequently receive comments from visitors suggesting that the drains need a clean!

Climbers abound at Chisenbury and over 70 different clematis can be found as well as many curiosities such as *Akebia quinata* and the lovely red-flowered *Jasminum beesianum*.

Secluded by a hedge, 'Woodruff's Corner' may be found behind a wall by the adventurous. It is a delightful recess, a few yards wide, where tender plants grow. In summer these are joined by plants in pot which are put on the millstone. Mr. Woodruff, the Robbs' general factotum, is the restorer of this area, repairing the wall and laying the flags on the ground.



Above: The double french-windows of the summer room open out onto a sheltered corner of the Stone Garden. A small fountain plays in a circular pool filled with waterlilies. Note the white clunch walls behind, which are such a feature at Chisenbury.

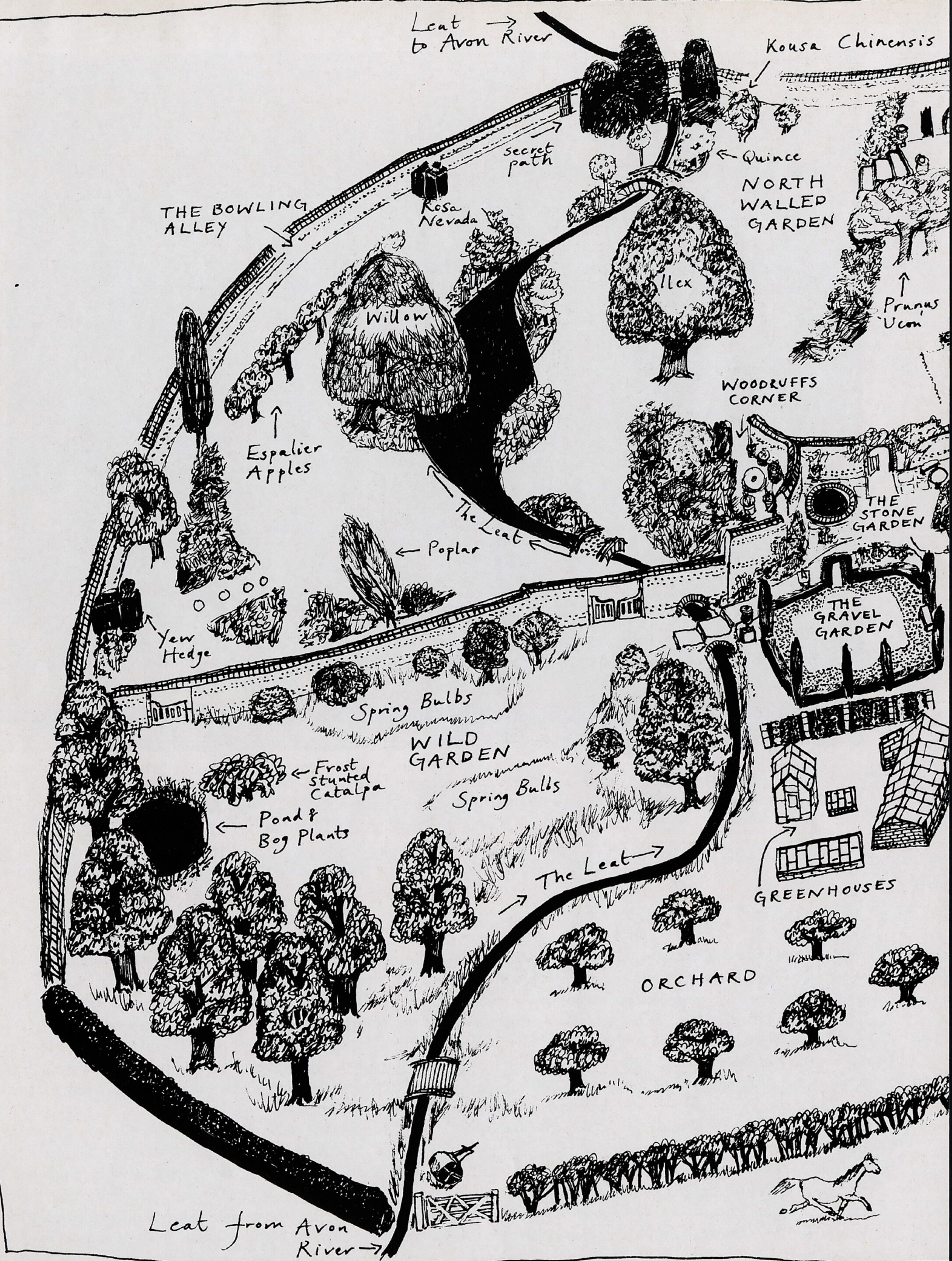
Here *Maurandia erubescens* and *M. barclaiana* and also its white-flowered form grow on the walls with another unusual climber *Dicentra scandens* from the Himalayas. This lovely climber has yellow flowers and in good years, blue fruits. Here also will be found the herbaceous *Corydalis flexuosa* 'Purple Leaf' (one of Compton, d'Arcy and Rix's introductions from China in 1989), the beautiful *Polemonium carneum*, whose flowers change from yellow to pink, and the chocolate-flowered *Cosmos atosanguineus*.

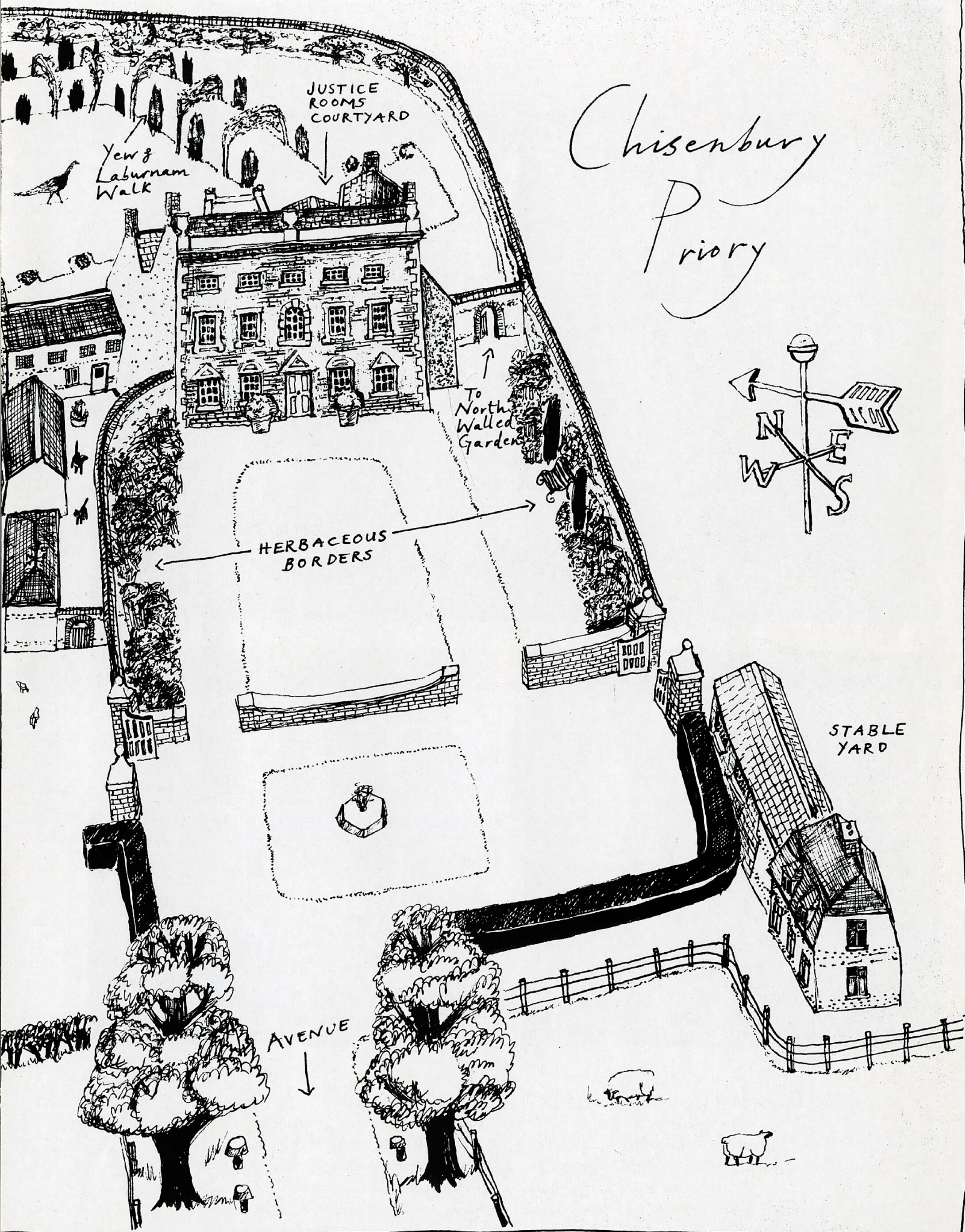
The lushness immediately surrounding the leat is a haven for water-loving plants which abound along the lower part of the garden. The true quince, *Cydonia oblonga*, evidently loves damp feet, along with hemerocallis, rodgersia and sanguisorba. Further along, half hidden, is

the magical 'Bowling Alley' – a narrow lawn bordered on both sides with espaliered apple trees 2.5m tall.

In autumn, on the wall side, all the way along appear the stately white flowers of *Anemone x hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert'. In seasonal contrast, but equally striking in early summer, on the opposite side, a thicket of *Campanula latiloba* 'Alba' radiates like a white carpet beneath the apples.

Through the door in the wall, and out into the wild garden, immediately one feels the space of open grassland, planted with many bulbs, herbaceous perennials and scattered shrubs. In one corner sits a pond surrounded by water plants. This large area is left unmown until July each year. Up towards the house, in the sheltered south and west-facing, sunniest part of the garden, is the Stone







Top: Pale pink flowers of climbing rose 'Lady Sylvia' grows against a west-facing wall with sweetly-scented, green-flowered *Tellima grandiflora* at its feet.

Left: *Campanula* 'Elizabeth', a spectacular cross between Japanese species *C. punctata* and *C. takesimana* is cleverly grown with the huge pleated leaves of the beautiful but poisonous *Veratrum nigrum* in a shaded part of Woodruff's Corner.

Right: The fine filigree leaves of bronze fennel *Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum' mixed with the grey, rounded leaves of *Macleaya cordata* in the herbaceous border.



The cool greens, blues and whites in a herbaceous border are dominated by twin *Juniperus* 'Skyrocket'. These evergreens are surrounded by a swell of 'Iceberg' roses, froths of *Crambe cordifolia*, like outsized *gypsophila*, and waves of catmint, *Nepeta* 'Six Hills Giant'.

Garden. This is a largely paved area with a circular pond with sloping walls. All around are several beds filled with a romantic profusion of sun-loving shrubs, such as *Salvia lavandulifolia* and *Potentilla fruticosa*. A meandering path winds its way up from the wild garden and leads through to Mary-Anne's new gravel garden. This is a great success, made last year; it rounds off a lawn, bordered with gravel 20cm (8in) deep, in which are planted many shrubs that relish good drainage around their roots, especially in winter. Here flourishes the beautiful *Sutherlandia montana* with its finely pinnate grey foliage and vibrant orange-red, pea-like flowers and many plants from South Africa, Mexico and California.

With almost the full circle completed, a final little surprise is in store. A tiny area only 3m square, covered in gravel, is found next to the path beside the house. On the gravel is perched a collection of sinks, eight rectangular sinks, two old sandstone ones and others that were once porcelain, covered in rough cement. These sinks, brimming with tiny alpines, epitomise Mary-Anne and Alistair's extraordinary and ever-surprising skills. 🪴



This year sees the start of Chisenbury Priory Gardening Courses. These days combine both hands-on gardening with practical demonstrations and lectures given by Jamie Compton who trained at Kew and was Head Gardener at The Chelsea Physic Garden for nine years. On June 21 they will be dealing with Gardening On Chalk and on September 5 they are running an Autumn Seed and Cuttings day.

Courses cost £40 per day (inc VAT) with morning coffee and lunch with wine provided.

For details contact Chisenbury Priory, nr Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 6AQ. Tel 0980 70406.

The Forum

Hope for our horticultural heritage

Anna Pavord investigates

Photographs by Georgia Glynn-Smith

Although Napoleon had other ideas on the subject, the English like to think of themselves as a nation of gardeners. No other country, we tell ourselves with great satisfaction, can match the richness and diversity of our historic gardens. Tudor knots, 18th-century landscapes, Victorian theme parks, Edwardian time warps, vistas, follies, waterworks, terraces – we have the lot. But for how much longer? Garden visiting increases each year by leaps and bounds, but grants for owners of important gardens to maintain them as they were once accustomed remain as difficult as ever to find.

There should have been joy in the shires therefore when the EC designated 1993 the year of the garden and set aside the funds earmarked each year for conservation of the architectural heritage of Europe, specifically for gardens of historic interest. "A garden of historic interest is understood as a landscaped creation of public interest in historical or artistic terms," explains the Official Journal of the European Communities in its orotund way. "It is regarded as having the status of a monument and reflects the close relationship between conservation and nature as perceived in the culture and traditions of each country."

So there we are. Cash for grabs. The garden at last accorded "the status of a monument." Garden owners, drowning in a sea of crumbling masonry, are at last offered a lifeline. Details of the scheme were announced in November of last year. But completed applications had to be with the Commission by the end of January, together with full photographic documentation of the garden (no photocopies), a history of its development along with sketches and archive photographs showing the various stages, and a full presentation of the conservation problems and associated solutions in both design and technical terms.

The Commission also requires plans showing the present condition of the whole of the garden in question and of the conservation project up for award. It wants quantity surveys, estimates of cost, a timetable of projected expenditure on restoration etc. All this, it recommends, should be put together by a landscape architect rather than the owner. In order to gain a possible groat from the Commission, you have first to spend ten of your own.

In effect, these constraints mean that only those with management plans already in position will be able to apply. This may have been deliberate

policy, to weed out those hopeless hopefuls with a loose interpretation of the term "historic". It may just have been bureaucratic lunacy. Nevertheless, 200 people asked English Heritage for the Commission's application form. "More than for any other scheme we have handled," said Joe Gallagher who is co-ordinating the applications at English Heritage.

That makes it sound as if EH has garden schemes dripping luxuriantly out of all its filing cabinets. Unfortunately that is not so. Until the late 1980s there was nothing. Then, after the great gales of 1987 and 1990, EH put in place a system of grants specifically for the replanting of trees in important historic gardens. Each storm rated 1.5 million pounds of government money. But before they could claim the cost of replacement trees, garden owners had to present a long-term management plan for approval. Grants covered three-quarters of the cost of preparing the plans, but owners took some persuading that the exercise would be worthwhile. Why? "A quite natural reluctance to increase the amount of bureaucracy in their lives," thinks Krystyna Bilikowski who has been administering the scheme. And, one might add, an equally natural reluctance to believe that a stranger, however many

Clipped yews in the garden at Mapperton, frame a scene of crumbling stone birds, guarding the antiquated stone font. This ornamental stonework stands between the lower pools which have both needed repairs.



letters he might have after his name, could know better what to do on your acres than you do yourself.

It has always been an anomaly that whereas funds (though limited) are available for the preservation of listed buildings, archaeological sites, flowers and woods in the wild, there has been no regular source of grants to preserve the work of Capability Brown, Humphry Repton, Joseph Paxton or Gertrude Jekyll.

That gardens have been granted

“Caroline Montagu estimates barely a third of the costs of maintaining her garden are covered by entry fees.”

any official status at all is due to the pioneering work of the Garden History Society and its indefatigable president, Mavis Batey. The society started life as an academic antiquarian group, but soon realised that if it was to have any practical effect on the future of historic parks and gardens, it would have to take its place in the battle line alongside other campaigning groups, such as SAVE.

Using Clause 4 of the Town and Country Amenities Act of 1974, the Society had some notable successes in defending important gardens against the depredations of roads, car parks, golf courses and supermarkets. The clause spelt out for the first time the idea that a garden might be important as a setting for a house, that the house, as a work of art, might be diminished without its immediate landscape.

But although Clause 4 was

useful to prevent insensitive development, it did nothing to produce cash for conservation. The society had a go at that too, making a submission to the Select Committee on Wealth Tax to ask for tax relief for owners of historic gardens. We all benefit from these, it argued. We should all, through the tax system, be prepared to contribute to their survival. The argument fell on deaf ears.

English Heritage, which appointed its first Inspector of Historic Parks and Gardens in 1989, is “committed” to the idea of a permanent grant scheme but has no cash. Any money it spends will probably have to be raised by some form of public subscription. But how? Will there be a levy on garden visiting? Will English Heritage go begging at the door of the National Heritage Memorial Fund?

This fund, originally known as the Land Fund, was set up in 1946 as a memorial “to dedicate some of the loveliest parts of this land to the memory of those who died in order that we should have freedom.” When a reluctant Treasury finally brought the fund out of its cupboard, many hoped that gardens would benefit. They seemed to fit the idealistic vision of the creators of the scheme. And nobody else was picking up the bill.

The NHMF has indeed been generous. It granted almost two million pounds towards the restoration of the superb, but derelict 18th-century garden created by Charles Hamilton at Painshill, Surrey. Since then it has found money for a trio of National Trust gardens: 4.8 million pounds for Stowe in Buckinghamshire, 2 million pounds for Studley Royal in North Yorkshire, £300,000 for the High Victorian garden at Biddulph Grange in Staffordshire. But these ad hoc payments do not approximate to a permanent grant scheme. Nor would the NHMF wish to tie its money up on a fixed basis in such a scheme.

But at least those – such as the Montagu family of Mapperton in Dorset – who have already been through English Heritage’s storm damage programme, now have most of the paperwork in place to chase the EC money. Caroline Montagu thinks, however, that the private owner will always be at a disadvantage ranged in a fight for funds against powerful bodies such as the National Trust. The Trust has submitted schemes for several of its gardens. They can cultivate friends at court in a way that is more difficult for private owners.

Mapperton has recently been upgraded in English Heritage’s register of historic gardens and is now listed as Grade I Outstanding. The garden is mostly laid out in a narrow valley which falls steeply away to the east of the house. Squeezed between the shoulders of the valley is a Peto-esque arrangement of terraces, water and yew topiary, laid out by a Mrs Labouchere in the 1920s. This lies on top of the original garden, made for the superb 17th-century manor that sits on a plateau above the valley.

Billowing mounds of lavender

“The nation wants us to preserve our historic gardens, but land can no longer support a garden.”

line the steps that take you down from the house to the valley. Wisteria, vines and clematis cover a complex Edwardian pergola. In the centre is a raised octagonal pool with steps rising up either side to small summer houses, thoughtfully provided with fireplaces. From this area, the land falls away steeply to

make another terrace in the valley. A tall square tower marks the boundary between the two sections. Below the tower is a long 17th-century canal with clipped yews along the sides, curved sofas of yew in the middle and spiky yuccas on the far side, marking the end of the formal layout.

This is what the visitor sees. What Caroline Montagu sees is crumbling stonework, dangerous bulges in retaining walls, melting statuary, gaps in tree cover, leaks in the pool. Reconstituted stone was Mrs Labouchere's choice for most of the copings, seats and benches in the garden. Frost has gradually reduced them to splintered fragments.

The garden is open daily from March to October, but money from admissions covers barely a third of the cost of maintaining the garden. Caroline Montagu estimates this at £20,000 a year under current management. There is one full-time gardener and occasional part-time help. By far the largest outgoing is wages," she says. "Then I suppose we spend between £3,000 and £5,000 a year on restoration of walls, terraces, things like that and at least £1,000 a year on the repair and renewal of garden machinery. Plants come way down the list."

The estimates that the Montagus have received recently from local builders give an idea of the costs involved. £3,000 to repair the front entrance wall. For work on the high retaining wall between house and valley, called with a black kind of relish Death Row, £53 a square yard. The wall is at least 52 yards long. Final bill, about £9,000. And this is a rela-

tively small historic garden. "How can we justify spending that kind of money when there are tenants' houses to repair, roofs that are leaking?" asks Mrs Montagu. Increasingly tough planning restraints make it difficult for small estates such as this to raise finance by developing small parcels of land for housing. "The nation wants us



A stone gryphon, draped in ivy, looks out on one of the most perfect gardens in the West Country.

to preserve our historic gardens, but what with? In the current economic climate, with agriculture at an all-time low, land can no longer support a house and garden in the way that it used to."

The Montagus' management plan, a 90-page document, has been expertly prepared by Livingston Eyre, the landscape architects who are shortly to start revamping Stonehenge. It is as richly larded with photographs, plans, aerial views, and estimates as even the most picky of EC commissioners could desire.

More than 950 dossiers were submitted for last year's round of

grants, which did not target gardens but the rehabilitation of town monuments. The EC paid out about ECU three million (roughly two and a half million pounds) for 44 of those projects. The budget is likely to be the same this year, but what criteria will the EC use in their judgements?

Must every country have a prize, like children at a birthday party? Certainly last year, at least one scheme in each member country got an award. Italy got six. England got five. The grants cannot exceed 25% of the cost of the work to be done, up to a maximum of ECU 150,000 (£120,000). You have to have your own £75 lined up before you have a chance of getting their £25, for no grant will be made unless the EC is satisfied that the owner of the garden has sufficient funds to finish the project in hand. Final decisions will be made in June this year on the 50 applications that have gone in through English Heritage.

At Mapperton, meanwhile, the bills mount up: £9.25 a metre (plus VAT) for new fencing to

protect the trees in a newly planted avenue. £2,000 for 28 standard oak trees. £425 for enough young yew trees to replace a hedge on the north lawn. £5,000 to take a mould from one of the decorative benches of reconstituted stone. £994 for building a buttress against a sagging brick wall. Despite the Montagus' difficulties, Mapperton remains one of the most perfect gardens in the West Country.

Mapperton, Beaminster, Dorset, DT8 3NR is open daily 2-6 from March until October. Admission £2.50. The house is open by appointment only. Tel 0308 862645.



F. imperialis

Ring Out the Bells

Beth Chatto reveals that there is more to
fritillaries than nodding heads
and the smell of foxes

Photographs by Hugh Palmer and Brian Mathew



F. imperialis



F. persica

Except for the large and well known crown imperial, *Fritillaria imperialis*, most fritillaries do not flaunt themselves from yards away, do not contribute overtly to the overall design of a border, yet, for many enthusiasts, they are irresistible. Dancing waves of daffodils may be soul stirring, but come April time, it is the fritillaries I am looking for in my garden. Many species grow wild in temperate regions all around the globe, in such varying conditions as cool woodlands, open meadows or bare rocky mountain slopes. They have an almost hypnotic appeal, with nodding bell-shaped flowers on slender stems in curiously subtle shades and colours – mysterious flowers of early spring.

Perhaps the earliest introduction was the flamboyant crown imperial who can trace her ancestry back, according to legend, to the days when she refused to bow her head as Christ passed by on the way to Calvary. From that time on, her haughty head has been bowed in shame, with unshed tears concealed in every flower, nature's design to attract pollinating insects with sweet pools of nectar. As early as 1611, John Tradescant was writing an account for the first Earl of Salisbury of "fortye fritellarias at three pence a peece" from

Holland. By the end of the 18th century, there was a vast choice in cultivation, and the favourites were frequently mentioned in verse and studied in flower painting. As early as 1620, an Amsterdam goldsmith, Daniel von Pilcom, fashioned in gold a replica of a flower of *Fritillaria meleagris* which opened to reveal a miniature watch. This exquisite piece of work can be seen in the British Museum.

In my garden, some time in March, a particularly pungent scent, wafted on a soft wind, makes me aware of the presence of *F. imperialis* long before I've noticed the first fat buds pushing through the bare earth. Some people find it distasteful, a foxy smell they say, but I find it exciting, one of the earliest signals to tell me the spring garden is coming to life. Its thick stems, clothed in whorls of juicy green leaves, burst through the cold soil with amazing speed, soon to be topped with a corona of lemon yellow or burnt orange bells beneath a pineapple-like tuft of leaves.

Fritillaria persica, from South Turkey, Iraq and Israel, grows on warm rocky slopes. It makes a very handsome garden plant in warmer counties, in well-drained, well-fed soil. Standing about 75cm (30in) it carries tapering



heads of dusky purple, grape-coloured bells clustered close to the stems above whorls of grey-green leaves. *F. persica* 'Adiyaman' is a fine selected form, taller and more floriferous. Plants such as the silvery-grey artemisias or santolinas make a good background for these fritillaries.

In my Essex garden I grow outdoors only those fritillaries that flower well and multiply provided I choose the right conditions. Free-draining gravel soil enriched with compost seems ideal for certain of the Mediterranean species. Average garden soil and full sun

would do as well if not better, provided drainage is good. In these conditions, *Fritillaria pyrenaica* forms good clumps once established and left in peace. Flowering stems clothed in narrow grey leaves are about 30cm (12in) tall, each carrying several wide chocolate-brown bells with rolled up edges showing yellowish-green enamelled linings. I think my form may be something special since it came from the late Sir Cedric Morris' collection and is particularly fine.

There is considerable variation in the species. All fritillaries are worth the trouble of bending your



F. tuntasia

back and tipping their faces up to see the often surprising insides.

Another treasure is *Fritillaria tuntasia*, a native of Greece, whose small open bells are almost black, enhanced with a silvery sheen, reminding me of ripe sloes.

Although these small fritillaries need suitable companions and settings to show them off, I find I have cut back invasive sedums or thymes, and surround the bulbs with a mulch of gravel to discourage slugs from chewing them off at ground level. Many forms of sempervivum make suitable companions, as do the silvery, encrusted saxifrages.

Fritillaria acmopetala presents no problems except that it tends to make a lot of tiny bulbs, like grains of rice, around the parent plants. I like the effect of their totally different, large, solitary leaves at ground level, in contrast with the linear, grey leaves which ascend the

flowering stems. The long, narrow bells with drawn in mouths are green and brown, and stand at various levels, some tall, about 61cm (24in), others shorter, more interesting than all at the same height. I have a drift running through *Libertia peregrinans* whose stiff narrow leaves, almost totally stained orange, make a striking contrast.

For the cooler parts of the garden there are more delights. *Fritillaria pallidiflora* from sub-alpine slopes of the Tien-Shan in Central Asia, is mouth-watering. Several lemon-yellow bells, each about 5cm (2in) long, are held above broad pale-grey leaves on stems 30-46cm (12-18in) tall. In total contrast there is *Fritillaria camschatcensis*, which ranges round the northern Pacific, from Japan through Kamschatka and Alaska to British Columbia, growing in moist, open woods. In the garden it likes a cool situation in deep loam with plenty of humus. Sometimes it disappears for a year or more;



F. acmopetala

do not despair, the rest seems to make it more vigorous. In early summer, each flowering stem holds several whorls of shining green leaves, topped with a cluster of open bells. Again I am fortunate to have a good form from Cedric Morris; smooth and matt black on the outside, it is deep mahogany inside with deeply grooved surfaces. This bulb was used as a food plant by North American Indians, boiled and eaten like potatoes.

Another of my favourites, and very effective in the garden, is *Fritillaria verticillata*, native to China, and naturalised in Japan, where it is used as a medicinal herb. It forms colonies standing 46-61cm (18-24in) tall, the slender stems clothed in very narrow, grey-green leaves which become curling tendrils towards the top, among the spires of delicate drooping bells, cream and green on the outside, pencilled with fine brown chequering within. They flower in May, looking lovely above deep blue scillas and low bushes of the dwarf

Russian almond, *Prunus tenella*, providing a froth of pink blossom.

Our native member of this exotic family is *Fritillaria meleagris*, the aptly-named snake's head fritillary, with wedge-shaped buds opening out to curiously angular shoulders, rather than a rounded top to the bell, a characteristic shared by several other members of the genus. There still remain a few undisturbed water meadows, notably in Suffolk and Oxford, where for a brief magical time they stand in flower as thick as blades of grass.

In my garden, they have slowly increased and seeded in heavy enriched soil, some in cool, open borders, others in the grass in open woodland. At Great Dixter, Christopher Lloyd and his mother before him have naturalised them for more than 70 years in an old orchard, on heavy loam. Seedlings produce quite a lot of variation, from white through pale pink chequered with green, to deep plum chequered purple. 🐍

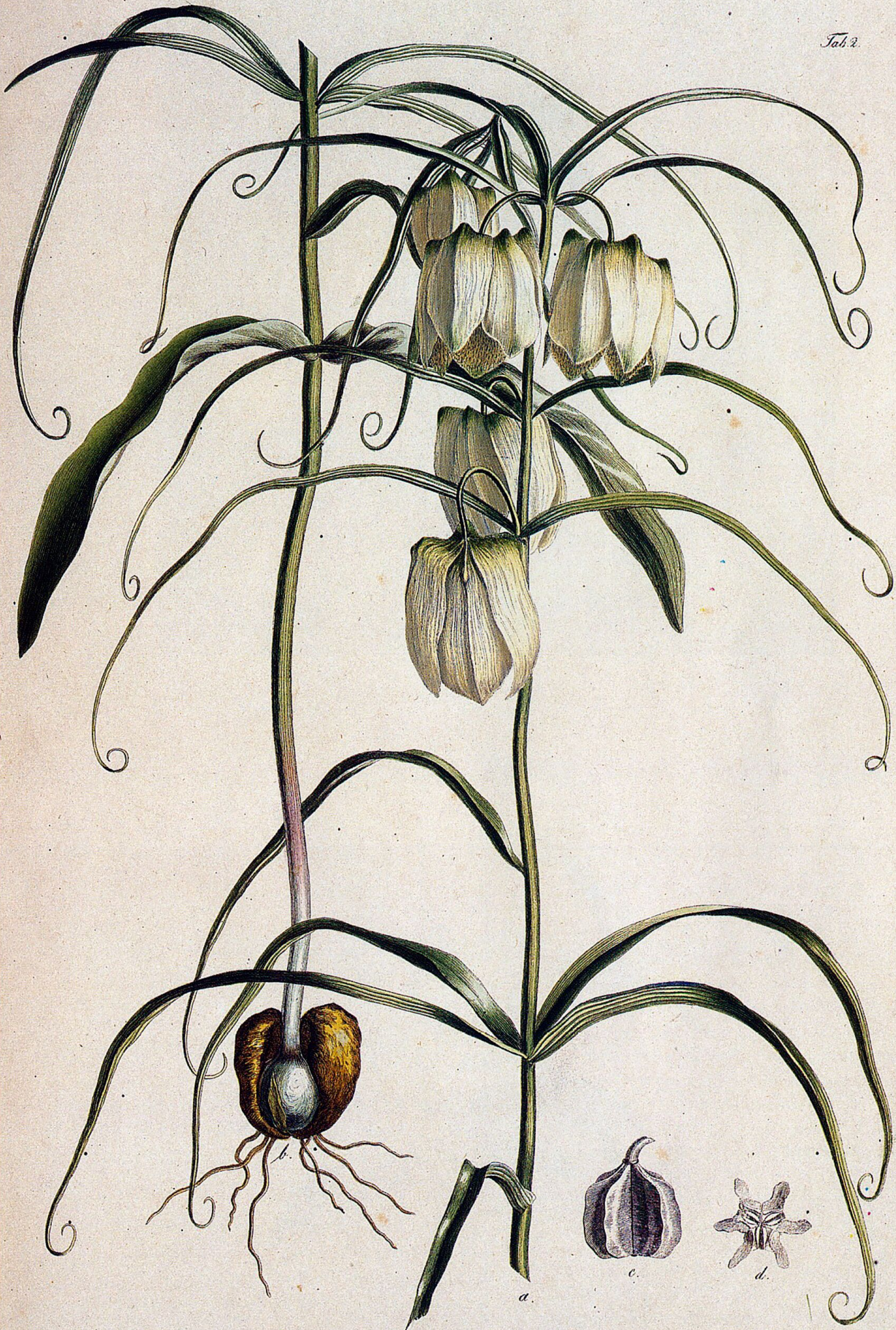


F. camschatcensis

General Note on Cultivation

While easily grown species, such as *Fritillaria imperialis*, *F. meleagris* and *F. pyrenaica* flower well, and increase in number if left undisturbed, it is advisable, from time to time to lift the bulbs, divide them, and replant in fresh soil or at least in refreshed soil, with liberal additions of well-made compost and grit. Blindness (non-flowering bulbs) sometimes results from overcrowding.

It is always worth trying bulbs out in different situations and noting where they appear to do best.
Do not wait until a dissatisfied species has deteriorated badly.



E. Bonnier ad viv. del.

Fritillaria verticillata.

F. verticillata



F. pallidiflora

AMERICAN FRITILLARIES

There are many beautiful species in The United States, but on the whole, even if available, it would be wasteful to try to grow them outside in British gardens. They need much more sunlight and heat, and usually rot in our damp and frequently overcast climate. Some, however, are the pride and joy of enthusiasts in this country who grow them successfully in a special environment.

Fritillaria affinis (lanceolata) is a very variable W. American species, with whorls of narrow leaves and several chequered brown flowers. Best in half-shaded bulb frame and kept fairly dry in summer.

Fritillaria recurva - the one we would all like to grow, from dry hillsides in S. Oregon and California. The scarlet tubular flowers are pollinated by hummingbirds. Needs a bulb frame, or pot in the greenhouse, kept dry in summer.

For more information:-

Books

The Bulb Book - Martyn Rix and Roger Phillips,
Pan original p/b, £13.99.

Dwarf Bulbs - Brian Mathew, Batsford (out of print), £10.

Fritillaries - Christabel Beck, Faber (out of print), £75.

Suppliers

Jacques Amand Ltd, The Nurseries, 145 Clamp Hill,
Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 3JS.

Avon Bulbs, Burn House Farm, mid Lambrook,
S. Petherton, Somerset TA13 5HE.

Broadleigh Gardens, Bishops Hull, Taunton,
Somerset TA4 1AE.

The Beth Chatto Gardens Ltd, Elmstead Market,
Colchester, Essex CO7 7DB.

Paul Christian Rare Plants, PO Box 468, Wrexham,
Chwydd LL13 9XR.



F. meleagris

Sir Simon Hornby

Interview by Michael Leapman

Gardening is all about passion, so it is fitting that the person most likely to be the next President of the Royal Horticultural Society holds passionate views on nearly everything and has few inhibitions about expressing them. After an hour and a half with Sir Simon Hornby, the 58-year-old chairman of the high street booksellers WH Smith, I can report emphatically that he detests rose gardens, variegated leaves and bright yellow flowers, and believes that "garden thought has become rather sterile. We've got to get away from the clichés."

On the credit side, he adores irises, peonies and rugosa roses and is, by happy chance, a fan of the RHS. "The lucky thing is that it has been frightfully well run. One thing I mustn't do is to go in bull-headed. You must never change for change's sake, but everyone on the Council wants to be doing new things and improving all the time. We've got to be sure we're not carried away by marketing and making money – which is very important, though – and forget about the excellence of horticulture. The service to horticulture has got to be outstanding."

"One thing that bothers me is the rate at which it is expanding. I've been on the committee of the National Trust for years (he stands down this year) and I've seen it grow from 70,000 members to over two million. It does bring a lot of pressures."

One item high on his agenda is a pet scheme to encourage propagation from trees and shrubs. Because of the cost of budding, and the time lag before the sapling is ready for planting out, few nurserymen are

willing to invest in it. Sir Simon would like an arrangement where customers pay, say, £25 in advance for a tree to be budded and grown for them, easing the grower's financial burden.

"I think a scheme like that is the only way we're going to get propagation – we don't do any at Wisley at the moment. It's something I want to look at for the RHS. I'm sure I'll be told it's impossible – but that's all the more reason for doing it."

This ability to bring a businessman's mind to bear on such issues is an important reason why he was selected by the Council of the RHS. "I'm a fanatical keen gardener and from my experience here at WH Smith I understand about marketing. The combination of those things, I suppose, is what they wanted. When I do things I really like getting involved. But I have to say I'm an amateur and I bluff my way through, as I do in life."

There speaks, you might think, a dilettante, a man born with a silver spoon in his mouth – a spoon in the shape of a multi-million pound business. His grandfather, C.H. St John Hornby, a friend of one of the original Smiths, became a partner in the firm exactly 100 years ago and the family connection has persisted, but he is a practical gardener who does not mind getting his hands dirty.

Last year he and his wife Sheran moved into a house near Wantage, Oxfordshire, with 50 acres of grounds. The garden will initially take up four acres.

"We have just the bones of it there – a lot of water, a lovely fast-running brook. I'm doing the trees and shrubs first because they take longest to mature. Then I'll get on

to the more formal bit in the walled garden. It will be great fun."

It is nearly 25 years since he last made a garden – at the Old Rectory in nearby Pusey, where the couple settled in 1968. There was nothing there when they arrived but after seven years it was being written up in the gardening magazines and admired by visitors.

From 1983 to 1987 his passion translated into print, in an elegantly written monthly gardening column for *Tatler*. Here all his prejudices – both positive and negative – were energetically paraded. His likes are outweighed by a long list of peeves. "Variegated things en masse can be extremely vulgar... those frightful gold and green eleagnus... God's palette of flowers is absolutely wonderful but when he got to variegation he sometimes went astray..."

"I hate rose gardens. I never know why people have them – they don't have weigela gardens or philadelphus gardens. A formal rose garden is as ugly a thing as you can find."

"I hate marigold yellows – they don't go with other things. I don't dislike all strong colours, though, and I think we make too much use of pastel shades."

"I don't like gardens that are too tidy. I'm a great believer in letting things seed – the hoe is almost banned with me. In a flower garden I like to see as little earth as possible."

Fortunately perhaps, he has no intention of imposing these strong views on the RHS. "It would be an awfully boring life if we all wanted to do the same things." Whatever happens during Sir Simon's term as President, boring is the very last thing it is likely to be. 🌿



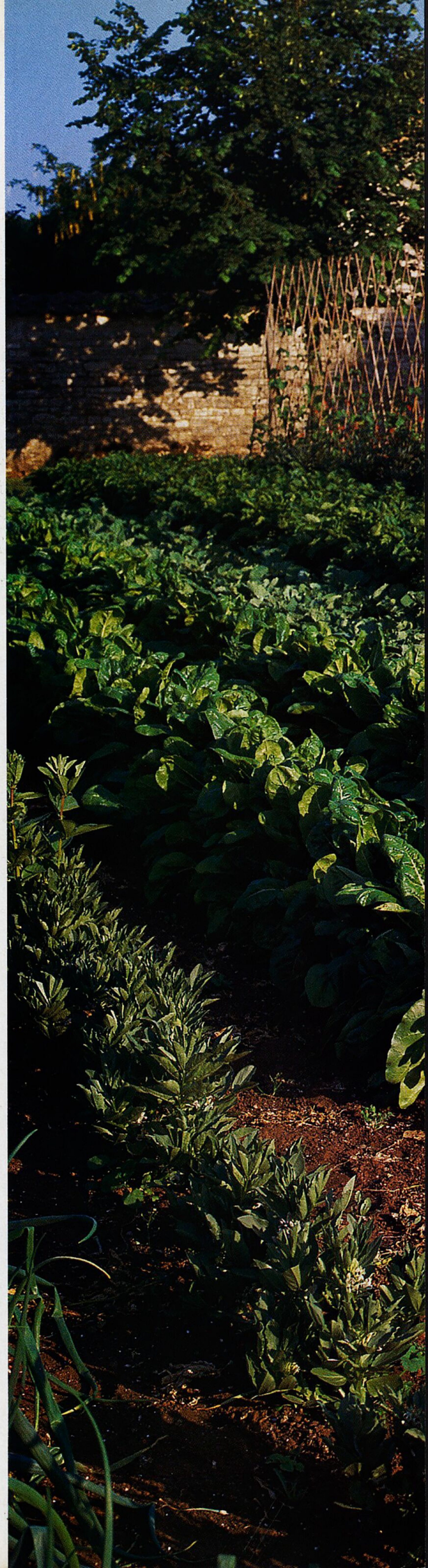


Hunstrete Revisited

Geraldene Holt returns to
this country hotel and its
historic garden where the
chef and the gardener
share their triumphs

Photographs by Hugh Palmer

Above: Beds of roses and lavender welcome visitors to Hunstrete.
Right: The staff in the kitchen keep up a steady demand for the
organically grown summer spinach and white-flowered runner beans.







Never go back, say the sceptics. Paradise can't really be regained. Last month I proved them wrong. After an absence of some years I returned to a garden I know well, at Hunstrete House, near Bath. I have always admired its beguiling blend of beauty and order, and the sheer exuberance of its kitchen garden. It was a joy to find it unchanged.

The low stone building of Hunstrete House stands on a bluff amid the rolling Mendip Hills. In 1646, John Evelyn, the famous diarist, mentions it as the home of Sir Frances Popham. Earlier this century it was the home of Lady Chancellor and, more recently, of

John and Thea Dupays who, skilfully and unobtrusively, converted the house into a luxurious hotel. From the moment he arrived, John Dupays set about restoring the garden to its former glory. With boundless enthusiasm and much hard work he re-created a superb garden in the 17th-century English manner.

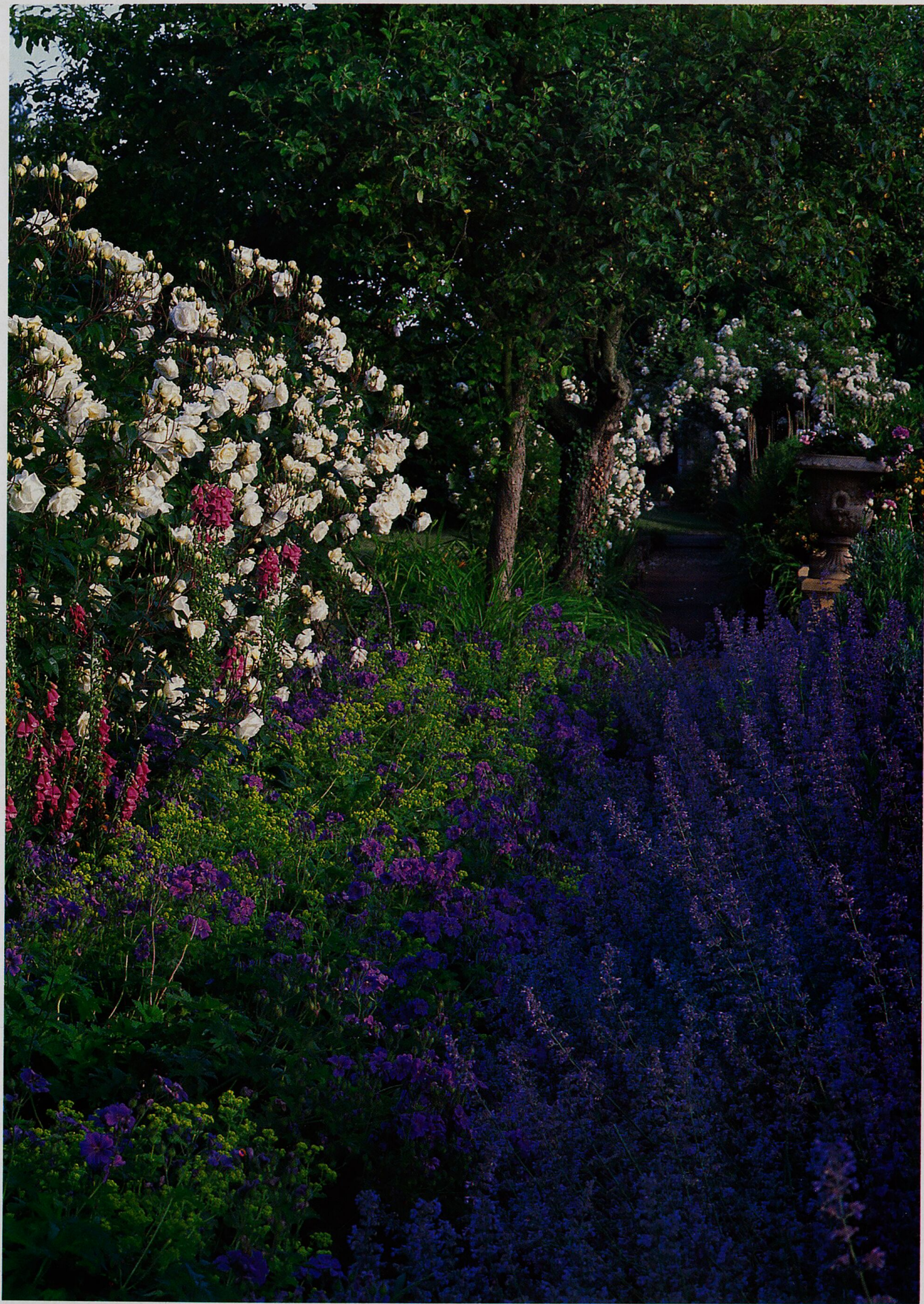
The kitchen garden and the pleasure garden are artfully entwined, the latter providing an elegant frame to the neat lines of edible produce grown in a double rectangular plot. This is screened from the house by a long stone wall with fine herbaceous border overlooking an expanse of lawn on its

south-facing side.

Entering through one of two gateways in the wall you find yourself in a world that bursts with a mid-summer luxuriance. Rows of baby carrots and slender leeks are cultivated against a backcloth of pale, trailing roses and hummocks of saxe blue catmint and purple lavender. An avenue of delphiniums bloom above a sea of red sage leaves, which leads to a bed of glaucous blue cardoons with clumps of thyme at their feet.

On one side of a grassed path, bordered with oriental poppies and ending in a double rose arch, is a large fruit cage containing soft fruit bushes – both summer and autumn-

Above: It is almost a pity to harvest the neatly regimented rows of 'Lollo' and 'Salad Bowl' lettuce. Baby leeks are sown thickly in spring and then thinned to give them plenty of space to grow in the autumn. Right: In contrast, grassy paths lead visitors from the kitchen garden into a glorious perfumed tunnel. The white rose 'Pax', is trained along ropes, which rise and fall above self-seeding foxgloves, *Geranium macrorrhizum* 'Ingwersen' and the billowing catmint, *Nepeta faassenii*.







fruiting raspberries, as well as redcurrants and blackcurrants.

The vegetables, fruit and herbs are unquestionably centre-stage at Hunstrete. The main purpose of the garden is to provide the ingredients for head chef Darren Bott's inspired cooking.

"Nothing can touch our organic vegetables for flavour," he claims with justifiable pride. "You can't buy onions and shallots as good as ours – they're not bulked up with heavy watering and chemical fertilisers, they are compact and firm-fleshed and taste superb. Not only is the produce from the garden – especially during the summer – an exciting starting point for my cooking, but our vegetable bill is minimal."

The kitchen gardening year at Hunstrete starts in January when Darren Bott prepares lists of the vegetables, fruit and herbs that he would like to grow for the kitchen. This is discussed with John Tucker, Hunstrete's head-gardener for seven years and now recently returned to oversee the garden once more.

This year's list contains old favourites: white and red-stemmed Swiss chard, endive and chicory, celeriac and 'Golden Wonder' potatoes, "though we are now concentrating less on the staples like potatoes and root vegetables than we used to," says John Tucker. "It makes more sense to specialise in those crops we can't easily buy – tender herbs like chervil and dill, for example. And those vegetables such as spinach that taste as they should when cooked freshly-picked from the garden."

Last year Hunstrete began to grow some of the more exotic vegetables that until recently were largely imported from southern Europe and Africa. They had good results with baby sweet-corn, pencil-slim French beans and gobstopper size globe artichokes.

Two polytunnels in the additional kitchen garden on the far side of the greenhouses are used for growing both cherry and currant tomatoes – the latter with seed from South Africa. Single-portion size Galia melons have been a success. But one of the most delicious and cost-effective crops in the tunnel is the Cape Gooseberry, *Physalis peruviana*, a relative of the Chinese lantern, whose sharply-sweet fruit ripens – almost gift-wrapped – in a papery husk which keeps the fruit in eating condition for some weeks. In the kitchen the husk is folded back to make a handle for the fruit, which is dipped into liquid fondant or golden caramel and served as a *bonne-bouche* at the end of a meal.

The herbs at Hunstrete figure prominently in Darren Bott's cooking, and all day long chefs in their whites dart out into the garden to gather produce. Fresh *bouquet garni* are prepared with a few stalks of parsley, a sprig of thyme and a glossy green bay leaf. Some of the less hardy herbs such as basil and coriander are grown in one of the greenhouses. During the early autumn, roots of parsley – both curly and continental flat-leaved varieties – are potted up for growing under glass to produce a valuable year-round crop, for no

Roses trained on wires, with clipped lavender hedges at their feet, screen the vegetable garden. When the previous owner, John Dupay, arrived at Hunstrete, this area was a run-down donkey paddock. Now it is a prolific provider of tender broad beans, carrots, lettuce and potatoes, which benefit from the sheltered position.



The outstanding gardens of this typical English country house hotel were the haunt of the diarist John Evelyn in 1646. This secluded spot is still surrounded by a glorious 92-acre deer park.

respectable kitchen can thrive without parsley.

At the height of the summer Hunstrete is self-sufficient for fruit. "We go mad for six weeks every summer," says Darren Bott, "when there is so much fruit from the garden that we are making jam,

jellies, chutneys and pickles, and fruit purées for freezing, in every spare minute of the day. In this way we enjoy the fruit of the garden all year round."

Walking back into the garden it is worth pausing to admire the *Actinidia deliciosa*, now, a few years

on, well-trained and producing a respectable crop of kiwi fruit each year. They were planted by John Dupays who, though now retired from Hunstrete House, has bequeathed a beautiful garden as a testimony of his endeavour. Would that we could all do likewise. 🍷

Hunstrete House Hotel

Hunstrete, Chelwood, Nr Bristol BS18 4N5.

Tel: 0761 490 490.

Open all year, no children under 12, no pets

Dinner for 2 from £59, Bed and Breakfast for 2 from £120.

The Gourmet Garden by Geraldene Holt, published by Pavilion, 1990 at £20.

Creative Herb Gardening by Geraldene Holt, published by Conran Octopus on March 25 1993 at £16.99.

A Taste of Herbs by Geraldene Holt, published by Conran Octopus on April 28 1993 at £12.99.

HUNSTRETE HOUSE RECIPES



SALAD OF POACHED QUAILS' EGGS, ASPARAGUS AND TOMATO WITH A CEP SAUCE

4-6 oz (about 2 handfuls) mixed young salad leaves
– oakleaf, frizzly lollo rosso lettuces, mache, radicchio
– washed and drained

4 medium-size ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded and quartered
24 asparagus spears or tips, freshly cooked
12 quails' eggs, poached

cep sauce:

4 oz dried ceps, soaked in a little warm water for 1 hour
2 shallots, peeled and finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
1 tablespoon olive oil
3 fl oz Noilly Prat
3 fl oz dry white wine
2 tablespoons cognac
7 fl oz chicken stock
7 fl oz cream
pinch of paprika
1 tablespoon chopped chives
salt, freshly milled pepper

To make the sauce, first drain the ceps and chop finely. Cook the shallots, garlic and ceps together in the olive oil over medium heat until golden brown. Add the Noilly Prat, wine and cognac to the pan and stir to incorporate all the cooking juices. Raise the heat and cook fast until the

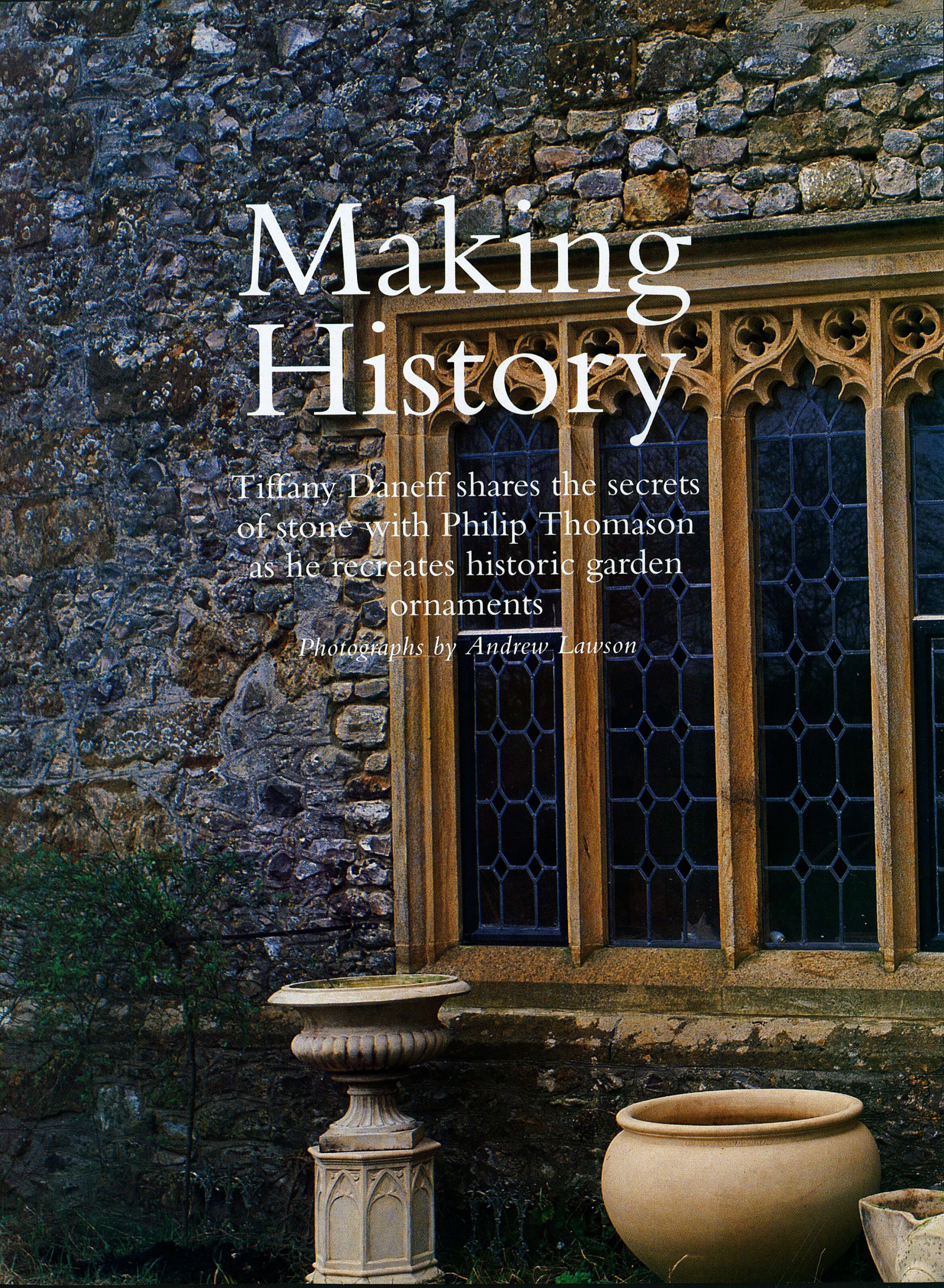
liquid is syrupy. Add the chicken stock and boil until the volume is halved. Add the cream, paprika and chives and simmer for 10 minutes, skimming off the skin as it rises. Pour the mixture through a fine muslin-lined sieve and season to taste. Cool slightly.

On four plates, arrange a heap of salad leaves in the centre and surround with the asparagus spears, quartered tomatoes and drained quails' eggs divided equally. Spoon over the cep sauce and serve straight away. Serves 4.

SOUP OF SUMMER BERRIES

12 fl oz red wine
4 fl oz port
4 oz caster sugar
1/2 cinnamon stick
2 turns of black pepper
8 oz strawberries
4 oz blueberries
3 oz raspberries
3 oz redcurrants
3 oz blackcurrants

Measure into a saucepan the wine, port and sugar. Add the cinnamon and pepper and bring to the boil. Pour the boiling liquid over the fruit and set aside to cool. Pour the contents through a sieve and transfer the fruit to a tureen or 4-6 soup bowls. Strain the liquid through a muslin-lined sieve and pour over the fruit. Serve as a pudding. Serves 4-6.

A photograph of a stone wall with a Gothic-style window and garden ornaments. The wall is made of rough, dark stones. The window has a wooden frame and a decorative iron grille with a diamond pattern. In the foreground, there is a stone urn on a pedestal and a large, shallow, light-colored ceramic pot.

Making History

Tiffany Daneff shares the secrets of stone with Philip Thomason as he recreates historic garden ornaments

Photographs by Andrew Lawson





Down deep-cleft Somerset lanes, banked with the sharp spikes of spring's first bulbs, the way leads to a hamlet: a few houses; a 12th-century church; and the old rectory. It appears a place that time – and the Department of Transport's road marking section – forgot.

This is where sculptor Philip Thomason is re-creating terracotta in the English 18th-century style of the Coade.

Used by all the greatest architects from Robert Adam to Sir John Soane, you immediately recognise it because it looks like natural stone. If not treated with linseed it turns green and acquires lichen, but where it differs is that it doesn't erode. Two hundred years later you can see the finger prints of the craftsmen who pressed the clay into the mould and marvel at the still perfect definition of the folds and creases of a goddess'

dress and the rampant curls of a lion's mane.

Outside the rectory, bought by the Thomasons eight years ago and lovingly repaired and lived in by Philip, Karin and their eight children, stand examples of the work currently being produced. Classical fountains, urns, statuary and all manner of garden ornaments and surrounds are manufactured in the workshop spread through two barns at the bottom of the garden. Much of the mixing, casting, firing and finishing can be done by his two assistants whom he has trained in this unique art, but all of the original modelling is done by Philip alone.

His training began 25 years ago, as an apprentice to stonemasons in Oxford. The next few years he spent working on architectural and monumental carvings for various commercial stonemasons, before joining the important restoration project on Wells Cathedral where he worked, as principal carver, for the next six years.

Boy and Girl: Over forty different pieces make up the mould for this fountain which has been produced exclusively for Architectural Heritage. Once cast, the pieces are then assembled and the seams 'fettled and towed' to remove all evidence of the join. For further information, contact Architectural Heritage, (see suppliers' listing, page 126).

Philip and Urn: Modelling tools are used for undercutting and sharpening up detail before firing. By using different supplementary moulds, an urn can be left plain or *décoré* with swags as here. Price £565 inc VAT.



It was in the early 1970s that he was asked to restore a pair of angels. On careful inspection it transpired that the angels were not carved from stone but from a ceramic material resembling it. But what kind?

Preferring to repair like with like, Thomason, determined to uncover the secrets of this mysterious material, asked a ceramicist from Stoke-on-Trent to analyse a sample. This provided some basic information as to the composition of the material, but much more research and a lot of trial and error was needed before Philip Thomason created his own clay and began experimenting to see how it should be fired.

Meanwhile he had left Wells and spent the next few years working on a number of major restoration projects for the Department of the Environment. These included the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey and the Royal Naval Academy at Greenwich, for which he carved two dolphins to go above the main entrance.

Working on a restoration project at Hestercombe, one of Gertrude Jekyll's and Sir Edwin Lutyens' greatest collaborations, an interest in gardens was awakened, and with it a single-minded determination to bring back the quality of Coade. Discovering a photograph of the Dutch Garden which appeared in an early edition of *Country Life*, it was noticed that originally a group of eight terracotta urns had stood there. Curious to discover more, they checked the records and found that these had been sold. It took months of searching before they were eventually discovered in the secret garden at Longleat. "Lord Bath wouldn't part with them, but he did allow us to reproduce them," says Thomason.

The recipe now perfected, Thomason's first major test was a success and the eight urns, copies of those originally cast in southern Italy in the early 16th century, stand in their rightful place at Hestercombe. But, more importantly, Philip became aware of a large gap in the garden market that he could fill. "I

saw this terrific effort being put into garden construction but in terms of ornaments you could only buy expensive antiques or mass-produced concrete objects. Realising that there was nothing being manufactured of real quality, I saw the potential for high quality terracotta ornaments."

Reluctant to reveal too much, Thomason concedes that his clay, prepared in an old bread mixer, consists of aggregates, glass, local ball clay (possibly the same that Eleanor Coade used), flint and "other secret ingredients."

Coade's real secret, however, lay in the technique. At the Lambeth factory the artists and craftsmen she employed distinguished their output by the uniquely high quality of modelling techniques and it is this that Philip Thomason admires most. "Look at the depth of undercut here," he says, bringing out a broken torso of the Goddess Flora (one of Eleanor Coade's most popular designs) from beneath the workbench. "The detail of the robes is magnificent. You see," he explains, "casting is not the end but the beginning. Essentially a crude process, it enables you to model the details and to finish the piece with great care."

Once dried, the clay is fired at temperatures over 1,100 deg C for an average of three days to render it frost proof. It is an exacting process, though easier now than it would have been in the 18th century when unexpected climate changes made it difficult to control the temperature in the furnace.

In Lambeth a fireman constantly stoked the blaze whilst craftsmen worked all around him. There would have been as many as 200 men and a few women employed in the yard. Today, with only three men, the Somerset output is lower, but although the demand for their ornaments is growing, both at home and abroad, the care given to each individual piece is evidently worthy of Mrs Coade's Manufactory. 🍷



Eleanor Coade was born in Exeter in 1733. A devout Baptist, she never married but devoted her life to her work and to charity. She died in 1821.

An inferior form of artificial stone had been made at Lambeth and patented by Richard Holt in the 1820s, but when the patent ran out Eleanor Coade took over the yard and began producing her own, much finer stone which included, amongst other things, finely ground glass in the clay. The Coade Artificial Stone Manufactory was formally founded at Lambeth in 1769, and over the next 70 years produced architectural, monumental and garden artefacts for over 140 architects and builders.

Employing many fine sculptors including John Flaxman and both John Bacons, Eleanor Coade's work was at the heart of the neo-classical movement, decorating the buildings of Robert Adam, Repton, Henry Holland, Sir John Soane, John Nash and James Wyatt.



Hestercome Urns: Made from Coade style clay, these are reproductions of the early 16th-century terracotta urns from southern Italy which were originally placed in the Dutch Garden at Hestercombe. Missing for decades, the originals were discovered at Longleat where they still stand. Price £825 inc VAT.

The Dog: Reclining whippet copied from an original made by a contemporary of Eleanor Coade. Rather than simply copying the original, Thomason has remodelled the figure entirely. Price £265 inc VAT.

The Hobhouse Pot: This pot is based on the shape of a 19th-century rhubarb forcer which Penelope Hobhouse considers the ideal shape for planting. At Tintinhull these pots are bursting with purple-leaved cordylines, pink-flowered verbena and shimmering diascias. The Hobhouse Pot is available from Penelope Hobhouse and Simon Johnson price £250 (small), £375 (large).

Drawing from Nature

A new rose, called 'Maria Hofker', joins the palette of plants in this precious allotment. Interview by Marie-France Boyer

Photographs by Marijke Heuff

After nearly 50 years tending an allotment outside Amsterdam, this spring artist Maria Hofker will be planting a new rose – bearing her own name.

At the age of 91, with her bun of frothy white hair, Maria Hofker is a very beautiful woman, and one who leaves nothing to chance: she designs her own clothes and drinks tea out of antique earthenware. Every little detail turns her life into a work of art. However, since 1949, her main source of inspiration and happiness, indeed her entire creativity, has been her allotment garden in Amsterdam, where she both writes and paints.

A best-selling biography, not yet translated into English, and various television programmes have brought fame, but it is the new yellow rose bearing her name which brings lasting pleasure. She describes it thus: "It is a rose for cutting which can grow to a height of 1.2 metres or more, it is yellow tinged with pink, and its colour fades a little every day. It grows softer in this way and takes forever to die. I am sure it is the scent which won me over,

A crimson poppy, immortalised on a page of Maria Hofker's handmade leather-bound book. There are now fifty of these treasure troves, filled with watercolours and notes which read like Japanese Haiku poems.





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for how can one grow attached to a rose with no smell?"

Born with the century in 1902, Maria Hofker came from a family of artists: "From my earliest memories, I was always surrounded by beauty, be it in the house or the garden." Her father, Georg Reuter, was a portrait artist, her mother studied drawing; her brother was an engraver and her two sisters were a sculptress and a musician.

What the Reuter family lacked in wealth they made up for in style and their wonderful houses. Thanks to her father, Maria was introduced to gardening at the age of five. She can remember clearly the day when her father caught her staring, perplexed, at a bowl she had just turned into a lake by burying it in earth, which she then wanted to

sow with seed. Her father said, "Maria, I congratulate you, for I can see that you are giving your garden much serious thought."

In this family all things of beauty were valued. They loved Fantin-Latour, Chardin, Velasquez, Gainsborough and Watteau, and their appreciation of Oriental art, as well as old china and books, was way ahead of their time. As a young girl, Maria learnt the art of 17th-century book-binding and calligraphy. Indeed, she was putting these precise and delicate skills into practice when she married Wilhem Hofker, a marriage which lasted 50 years.

In 1938, the couple went to live in Indonesia, then a Dutch colony. They subsequently spent some heavenly years in Bali. Beautifully

illustrated letters that she sent to her family express the delight Maria found in the new shapes, colours, sights and sounds of the island. Then war came and shattered the dream. The Hofkers were imprisoned for two years and when they eventually returned to Amsterdam Maria suffered a prolonged bout of ill health.

Thanks to a tiny plot of land, she learnt to live again. An old friend suggested she might rent a 16 x 17 metre plot near his own, an allotment three or four miles from the centre of the city. It was mostly grass, enclosed by two canals. Some of her neighbours favoured garish gnomes, red salvias and Indian carnations, while others concentrated entirely on potatoes, carrots and leeks.

Above: The allotment is second home to Maria Hofker, a place to work and enjoy a cup of tea.

Right: All the plants have that well-loved look in this tiny garden, but roses like 'Nevada', 'Gypsy Boy', 'Golden Showers' and 'Madame Alfred Carrière' have become life-long friends.





A great tribute. The sweetly-fragrant, yellow, large-flowered rose, christened 'Maria Hofker'.

Maria was 47 when she took on the allotment. She was working as her husband's assistant, but was still in a fragile state. As soon as she started to visit the allotment, she felt a great delight at being outdoors and creating something new. She began by planting fruit trees and sowing foxglove seed to remind her of her beloved father's garden. Next she drew plans for narrow paths, crossing at right angles, and the statue her sister gave her was carefully placed in a position where it would attract the eye. Soon she turned to roses, planting variety after variety: 'Nevada', *R. damascena*, 'Gypsy Boy', 'Golden

Showers'. As she talks, 'Zéphirine Drouhin', 'Madame Alfred Carrière' and 'Honorine de Brabant' appear in her conversation like old friends.

Right up until she was 85, Maria would hop onto her tall black bicycle and make her daily visit to the little plot. She remembers the early days when people on the neighbouring allotments criticised her gardening style. They called it a mess, but Maria had been to England and become familiar with the work of Gertrude Jekyll and with Vita Sackville-West's wild garden at Sissinghurst. She knew a good gardener favoured an exuberant flow of

annuals and perennials, sheltered by sturdy hedges.

From the very beginning, Maria took serious, descriptive, botanical notes of her work in the garden. She supported these with drawings which she bound into yearly volumes. As the garden grew, she flourished alongside it, regaining physical strength and exploring her true feelings. Her notes and drawings are a testament to the joys of these new discoveries. Her modest Lilliputian garden, which she doesn't even own, has nonetheless become a garden of Eden, providing the reason for living for an old lady who would appear eternal. 🌹

Right: Exuberant planting, inspired by visits to England, may have baffled her fellow allotmenters but undaunted, Maria Hofker soaks in the beauty of her salvias, foxgloves, poppies and thistles. For many years she would ride to the allotment on a large black bicycle, in the Dutch style.





The Plant Finders

Patrick Taylor discovers some
perfect gems at Hadspen Nurseries

Photographs by Andrew Lawson

Borders in the old walled kitchen garden at Hadspen have been planted with fastidious regard to colour. The yellow borders, backed with beech hedges, are richly planted with lady's mantle, *Alchemilla mollis*, feverfew, golden daylilies, hostas and stonecrops, and great swathes of *Euphorbia c. wulfenii* spill over onto the gravel path.





For many gardeners, the most satisfying source of plants is the small private nursery attached to a garden in which the plants may be seen doing their stuff. As the major nurseries cut back their range, and as garden centres offer an impersonal and mass-produced selection of favourites and novelties, an independent nursery can make a virtue of a distinctive taste in plants and of their use in the garden.

Nori and Sandra Pope came to Hadspen from Vancouver in 1987. They had been running their own nursery in Canada, specialising in old roses, and planned a sabbatical in England to visit gardens and nurseries. They discovered that Hadspen was in need of a gardener and, in fairly short order, found themselves in charge.

The gardens at Hadspen have a distinguished past. Under Penelope Hobhouse, the brilliant plantsman Eric Smith had come to work in the nursery in the mid 1970s. He introduced a stream of dazzling new herbaceous cultivars bearing the Hadspen name: many hostas (his special interest), a splendid brunnera with cream-margined foliage, *B. macrophylla* 'Hadspen Cream', and a particularly fine Japanese anemone, *Anemone hupehensis* 'Hadspen Abundance', with very deep pink flowers. All these are still propagated by the Popes, who have added plants of their own introduction and breathed new life into the garden.

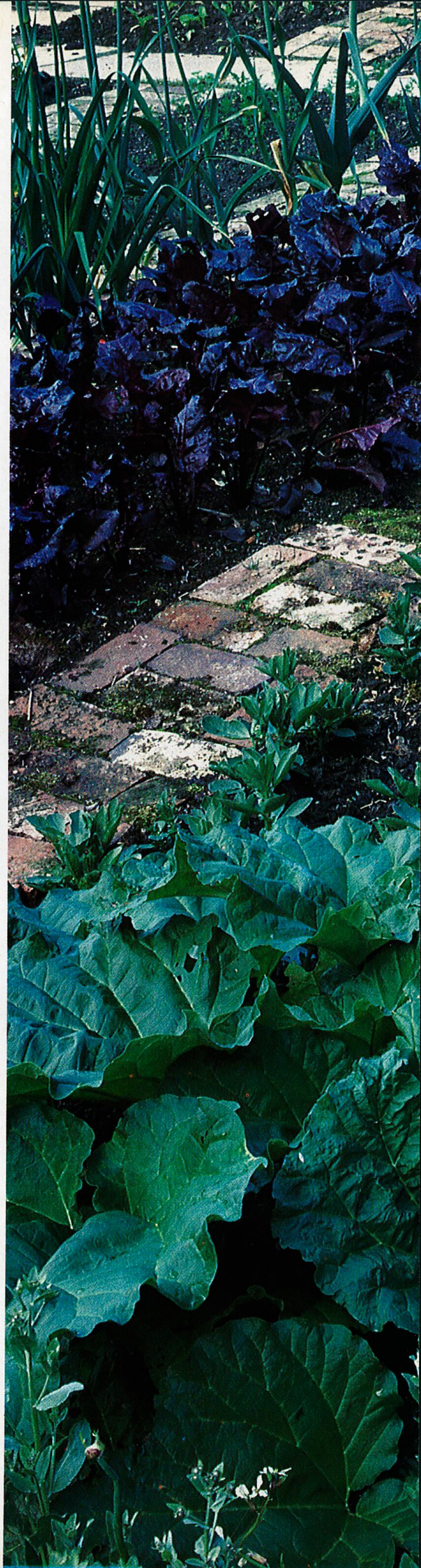
The Popes' chief interest lies in herbaceous plants, although they still offer a fine selection of old roses and several of those handsome grey-leaved shrubs which make an admirable background to

flowering plants, such as artemisia, *Atriplex halimus*, perovskia and teucrium. Their stock scarcely overlaps at all with the offerings of garden centres, yet there is no snobbery in their choice of plants – they may be excited by a new introduction but they have no interest in plants whose only virtue is rarity. The Popes believe that most of their customers associate them with a particular style of gardening and want to be able to buy the plants they use. All the plants sold in the nursery may be seen growing in the garden. In the magnificent walled kitchen garden, borders are planted in lively and skilfully controlled colour harmonies; throughout the growing season – a long one in Somerset – these borders display a range of excellent plants discerningly used. Indeed, colour is so important to the Popes that plants are divided into colour groupings in the nursery.

As a 12-year-old schoolboy, Nori Pope worked as an apprentice propagator to a gifted Austrian nurseryman in Vancouver, an old-fashioned martinet for whom he grafted more miniature roses that he cares to remember. This early training, together with a degree in botany from the University of Victoria, gave him an excellent background in practical and theoretical skills.

At Hadspen he has introduced some splendid new cultivars. *Dahlia merckii*, one of the few species of dahlia hardy in Britain, is an elegant herbaceous perennial with handsome lilac flowers on rather lax, waving stems. It is an admirable border plant, carrying its flowers airily above more solid plantings below. Nori knew from

Most of the old kitchen garden at Hadspen is given over to purely ornamental schemes but a neat corner preserves the *potager* atmosphere. A brick path fringes old forcing pots and rhubarb leaves erupt from the earth.



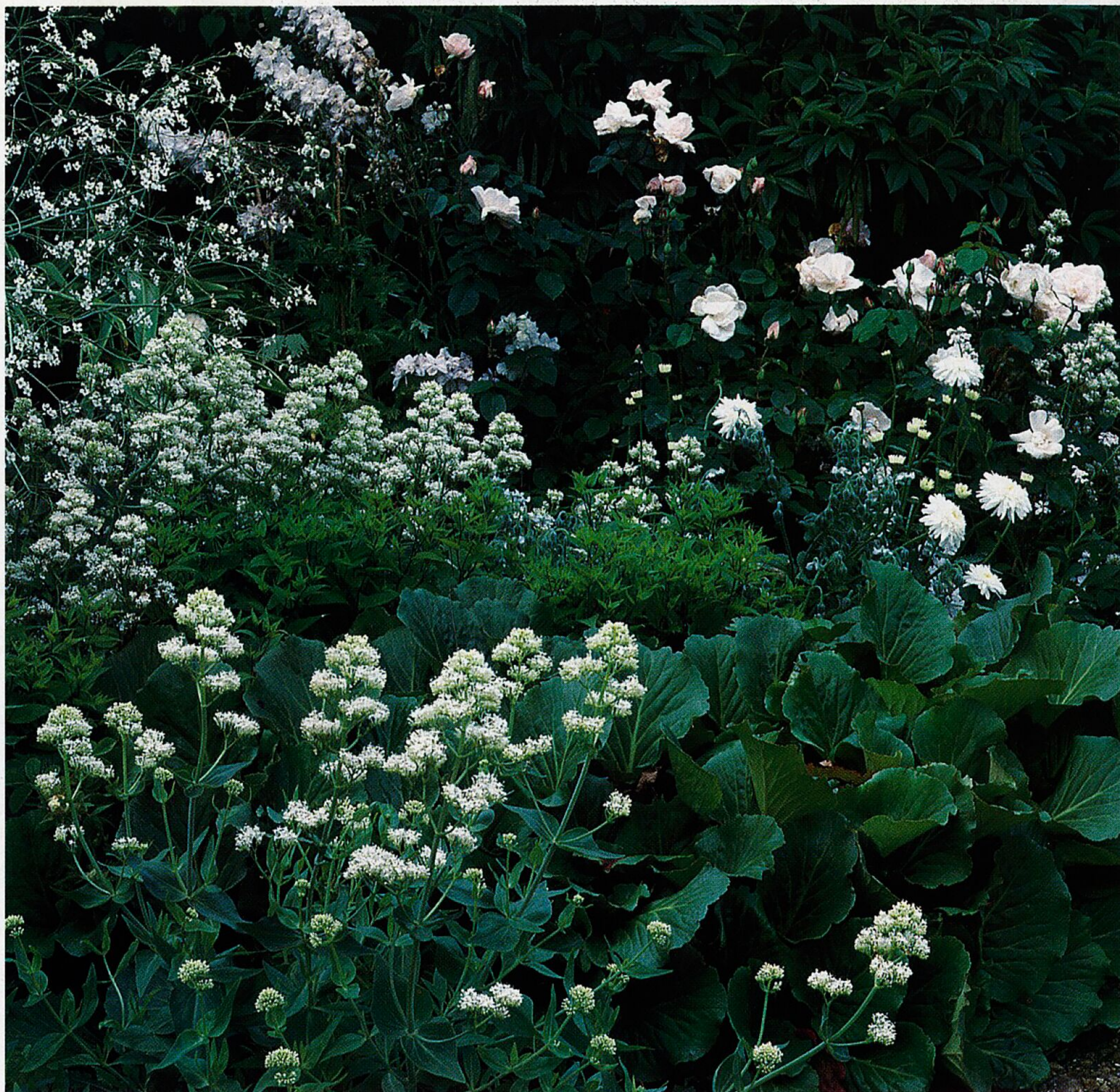




Top: The striking red of *Astrantia* 'Hadspen Blood' and its free-flowering habit make it an outstanding introduction.

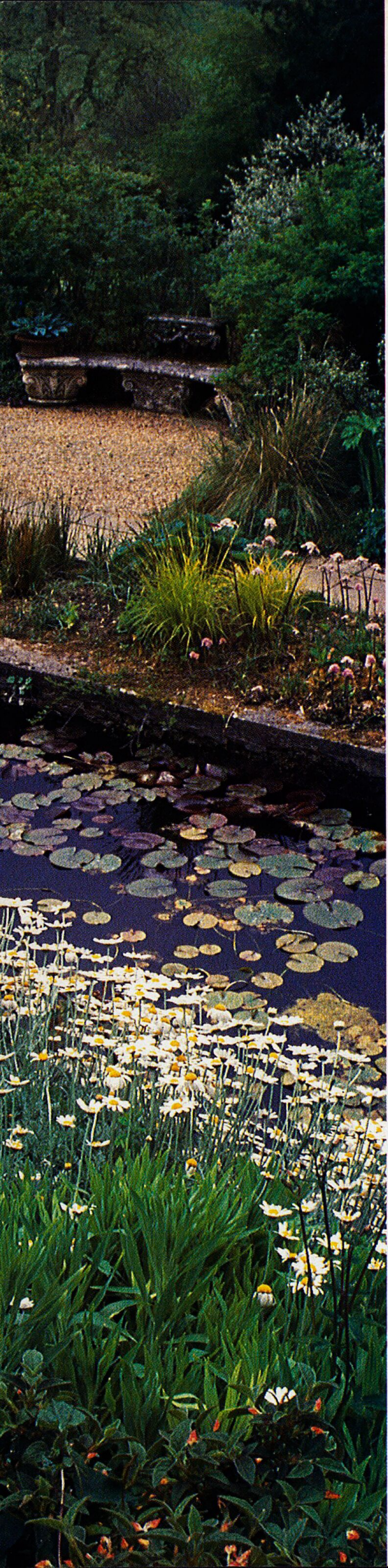
Left: A nifty harmony of 'Black Parrot' tulips, silver cardoon and purple-leaved sage.

Right: A marvellous new plant for the border – the blowsy, generous blooms and rich colour of *Papaver orientale* 'Patty's Plum'.



Top: Cool white valerian and clouds of *Crambe cordifolia* rise over the emphatic foliage of bergenia. Left: A gravel path weaves between purple sage *Salvia officinalis* 'Purpurascens' and *Nepeta* 'Six Hills Giant'. Right: A sea of cream, white and yellow laps about a gravel path in the double Yellow Borders.





Graham Stuart Thomas that a white-flowered form had existed between the wars, and set out to breed a new one by selecting pale-flowered forms and repeatedly cross-breeding until, eventually, a pure white was achieved. A special selection of this, with pointed rather than rounded petals, is now offered for sale – *Dahlia merckii* alba 'Hadsphen Star'.

A similar adventure in plant breeding has led to a magnificent new astrantia, *Astrantia* 'Hadsphen Blood'. This was the result of a deliberate attempt to cross *A. major rubra* with *A. maxima*. The result is an astrantia with flowers of the deepest possible red which has the added advantage of being repeat flowering, producing these strikingly-handsome flowers well into autumn.

Astrantia 'Hadsphen Blood' represents the Popes' first breakthrough into the wider world of plant introduction. This plant has been propagated by tissue culture,

and a licence for its exclusive distribution in Britain has been granted to Webbs Garden Centres Ltd. So now we can expect to find it in all good nurseries.

Many new plants arise when someone has the discrimination to recognise the special qualities of a chance seedling or sport. Lurking at the back of a border in Patricia Marrow's garden at Kingsdon in Somerset, the Popes spied a wonderful form of oriental poppy that had richly-decorative plum-coloured flowers with black centres.

Mrs Marrow is herself an accomplished nurserywoman and, to the best of her belief, this was the chance offspring from a packet of seeds. That splendid perennial poppy, first seen in her garden, is now sold by the Popes as *Papaver orientale* 'Patty's Plum'. In the more decorous pages of *The Plant Finder*, it is known under the name *P. o.* 'Mrs. Marrow's Plum'. 🌹



Hadsphen Garden and Nursery is open from March to October, from 9-6, Thursday to Sunday inclusive plus bank holiday Mondays.

*Hadsphen Garden Nursery, nr Castle Cary, Somerset
BA7 7NG. Tel 0963 50939.*

*There is no mail order but a good list is produced
(please send two first class stamps)
and the Popes will make up orders for collection.*

*Astrantia 'Hadsphen Blood' 1 litre pot £4.50.
Dahlia merckii £2.50 and P. o. 'Patty's Plum' £4.*

An old cistern, the original water supply for the house, makes a dramatic lily pond fringed with moisture-loving plants like rodgersias. It is backed by a high, south-facing brick wall which provides a sheltered home for many tender climbers and wall plants.

Myths

CHARLES LYTE TELLS US WHY WE SHOULD LOOK TO OUR LAURELS

Bay, sweet bay, the noble laurel are all names for *Laurus nobilis* now relegated to its relatively lowly role as a culinary herb from a much more glorious state in history. It was the sacred tree of Apollo, the Greek god of the sun, music, poetry, prophecy, agriculture and rural life.

In ancient Rome, victorious generals were crowned with wreaths of bay leaves, and their soldiers used them to decorate their helmets and spears, and carried handfuls of leaves. Chaucer said that the Knights of the Round Table wore chaplets of bay.

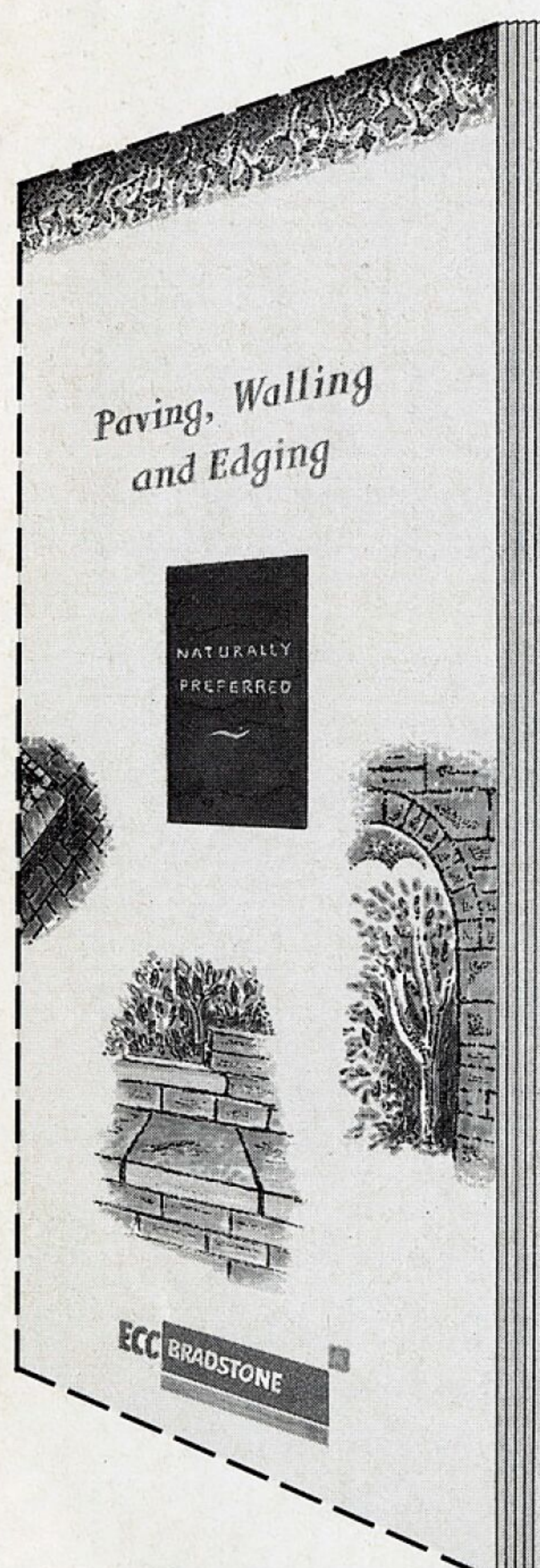
Poets who distinguished themselves in the Middle Ages were crowned with *Laurus nobilis* wreaths bearing berries, from which practice derived the poet Laureate. University graduates – bachelors – got their title from the anglicised form of the French word, *bachelier*, which in turn comes from the Latin, *baccalaurens*, a *Laurus* berry.

In mythology the bay tree was created out of a nymph, Daphne, daughter of the river Peneus, who, fleeing from the lustful approaches of Apollo, ran to the bank of the river and begged her father to save her. He turned her into a bay. Quite unrepentant, Apollo took on the additional name of Daphnephorus, which in turn gave rise to the important religious festival, Daphnephoria, held every nine years at Thebes.

The bay was one of the many trees supposed to incarcerate spirits of one kind or another, particularly the golden bay, *L. nobilis* 'Aurea'. The Greek story has it that there was a barren woman who prayed for a child, but all she was given was a golden berry, which she threw away in disgust. From the berry grew a golden-leaved bay, which so impressed a prince out hunting that he gave orders for his meal to be prepared and served under it. When the cook turned his back a beautiful maiden stepped out of the tree and threw salt on the food. When this happened a second time the prince hid, saw the girl come from the tree, and captured her.

Young girls believed bay played an important part in the search for a lover. They would pin a leaf to each corner of their pillow, with one in the middle, on St Valentine's Night, and hope to dream of a husband. Another custom was to sprinkle bay leaves with rose-water, lay them on the pillow, lie down wearing a clean nightdress turned inside out, and recite: "Good Valentine, be kind to me, In dreams let me my true love see."

A bay tree in the garden was regarded as giving protection against storms and evil. The berries were used to treat fever, flatulence, snake bite, wasp and bee stings, maternity problems, convulsions, aches and cramps.



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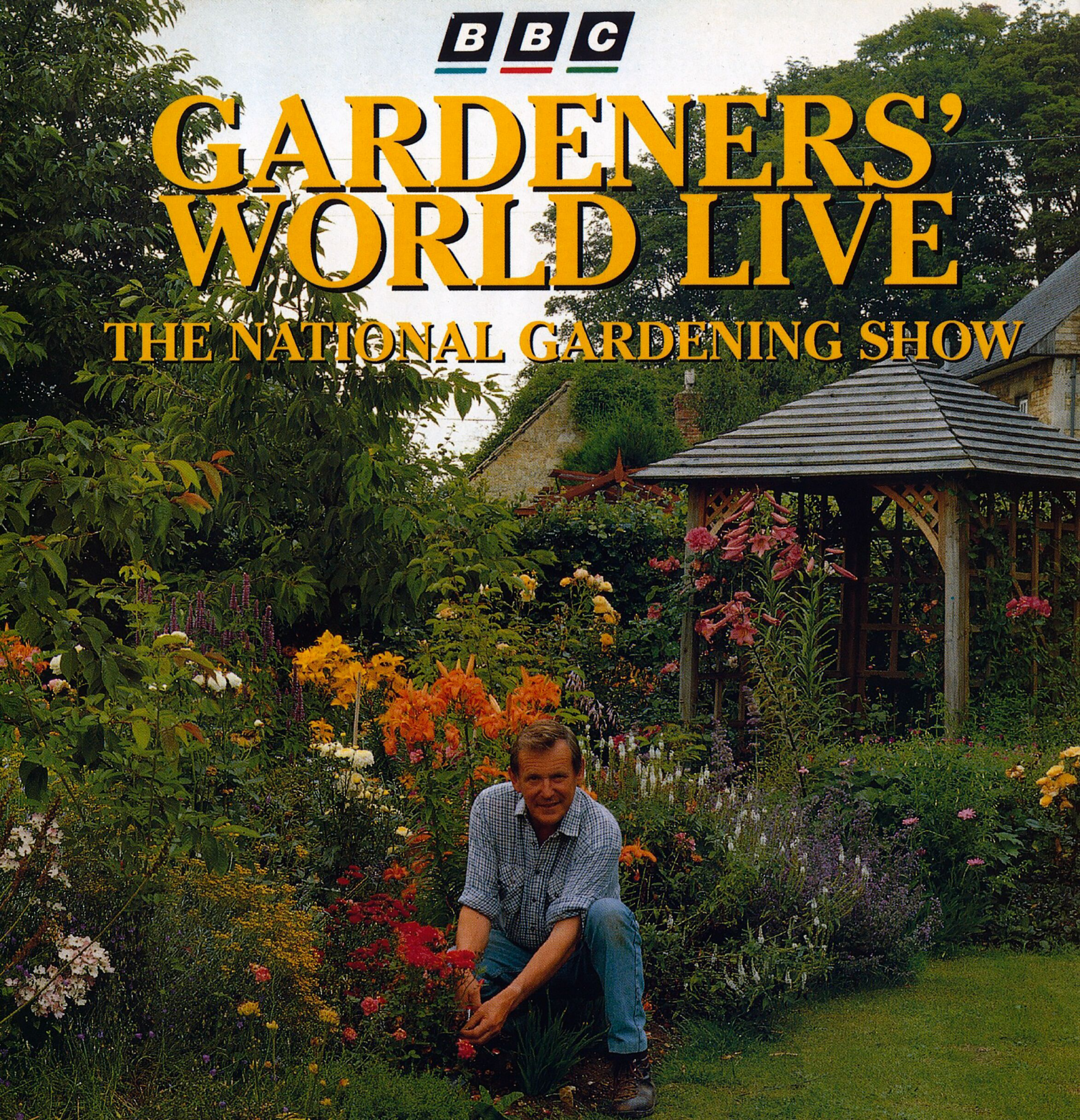
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THE ROYAL
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Think twice before you mow

says Stephen Anderton



However much we gardeners think about mixing knife-edged, geometric hedges with perennials billowing softly out onto paths, when it comes to grass we have a two-dimensional cut-out. We tend to think of it firstly as space and an absence of structure, as green wall-to-wall carpeting – as a *setting* for the real gardening.

But grass can have a third dimension as much as any other perennial, if it is only allowed to grow. You only need look at a successful meadow garden or even a field of cliff-top barley rippling in an on-shore breeze to see that grass can be a significant part of the texture and the structure of a garden, if it is mown to that end.

Very small gardens occasionally dispense with grass for open spaces, and rightly so. Close to a house there is a need for every inch to look usable; there will be a great deal of walking and sitting down. In a garden with space to spare, plenty of lawn around the house will be delightful, a breathing space for the house itself. But where should that close-mown grass stop? Short grass looks best when it is

needed, for regular convenient access. Once you go beyond that, then it is time to consider allowing the grass to grow taller. It will be less ostentatious, and far more interesting to look at and to garden unless, like the man in the adverts, your idea of heaven is a weekend aboard a ride-on mower with a pipe full of tobacco.

Long grass does not have to mean meadow grass, with an expanse of hay to cut in July or August. Instead you can cut some areas perhaps on a monthly basis, to 4-5in (10-12cm), which will still make a flat green surface, but which will give a contrast to the close mowing, especially if you have paths of one across the other (whole formal gardens have been made this way, like horticultural cut moquette). For this kind of mowing a powerful rotary machine is ideal. You can either let the clippings fly, or if you want a more groomed appearance, choose a side-delivery machine which will put the clippings in rows for raking up; this is much faster than raking the whole area.

This style of mowing looks good in large open areas, and



Miles Aldridge

generously-proportioned, close-mown paths across it can be used to break up the expanses and make low-level vistas. It is surprising how people will stick to a close-mown path to cross an open space, so long as it has not been set up as an illogical detour. If so, then people, like all sensible animals, will make their own tracks to get from A to B directly. You will even do it yourself, I promise!

In full-length meadow grass the problem of 'accidental' paths is even more prominent. Where one person treads in spring, many more will follow just to find the mystery attraction in the grass ("It must be an orchid"), and before you know it there is a path into your meadow. Not the end of the world, you say, yet there is something wonderful about a perfect waving meadow, like a lawn covered in virgin snow; it seems a shame to tread on it.

So where paths do cross meadow grass they must be wide enough. Always allow at least 5ft (1.5m), so that when the grass is wet and flops over, you can still pass by without damp trousers. Make the grass a promise, not a threat.

Long grass has many uses in a garden, apart from being somewhere to grow wild or introduced flowers. It can soften a woodland fringe, or bring the line of the wood forward. It can screen a lake shore or river bank to control access to the water. And it can bring a whole new interest to old orchards or areas amongst mature or young specimen trees.

Newly planted trees in the open so often look lost, and an interregnum of meadow grass with gracefully curving paths through it will do much for the garden in the early years. Keep the curves easy and few, to avoid the golf course look. Young trees do infinitely better without the competition of grass at their roots, so for a few years maintain an empty 3ft (1m) circle, either by using a mulch mat or a herbicide.

Arrange the paths so that the trees are at least 6ft (2m) into the long grass and cannot create that "joining-up-the-dots" effect. Let the occasional tree sit in the path itself, perhaps with a pool of short grass round it – a shady oasis in which to sit and listen to the bees visiting the lime trees or bumbling across the tops of the grasses.

A Path to Your Desires

Rosemary Alexander explains the design principles involved in creating a path

Paths are the arteries of the garden, not just a means of access. The visitor travels through the garden, passing by or resting at different areas and experiencing a variety of sensations along the way. Paths should take you from one space to another in the garden, either directly or better still, as in the Chinese tradition, by winding or crossing to allow full enjoyment of every view and scene as the garden unfolds. Paths should link the house and the garden, preferably in a way that keeps the feet dry and clean.

The natural or logical routes around a garden are called the 'desire lines' in landscape architecture jargon; the shortest or most direct route from A to B is often visible as a muddy track in parks or neglected gardens. If the garden is well laid out, these 'desire lines' should disappear and a system of paths take over. As the lifeblood of the garden it is very important that the paths are safe and well built.

Path widths should vary, depending on how they are to be used. Often a garden will require a major path or drive of over 10ft (3m) width, and other main paths of about 4ft (1.2m) – this width will allow two people to walk abreast while conversing. Subsidiary paths can be 34in (85cm) wide, but then people will need to walk one behind the other.

The main circulation through the garden will usually begin and end at a



The promise of a good path invites you to discover what lies beyond; a shady resting place, enticing perfumes or the surprise of an unexpected vista.

terrace or paved area where house meets garden. The area of terrace should be in proportion to the bulk of the house, the house appearing to be firmly anchored to it – too mean a terrace can make the house look as if it is erupting from the terrace.

Paths should also appear to flow from the house, perhaps having both their starting point and width dictated by the main door on to the terrace. Similarly, subsidiary paths can spring from other doors or gateways, or even the rectangular corners of the house. There is nothing more irritating than a path which does not quite line up with a particular feature when the two converge! The shape and volume of the house interior may be echoed on the larger outdoor scale, but interior dimensions, when

reproduced in open landscape, might seem mean and claustrophobic.

Paths must always lead somewhere, either from one part of the garden to another, or to a seat or summer house. Strong simple lines indicate the underlying structure of a plan. Curves may be used, but it is more effective only to see one curve at a time, and for that curve to be bold and decisive. As the point of a path is to be able to walk dry-shod in wet weather, so the material must be chosen carefully, be laid on a firm foundation and also quickly drain away surplus water. Smooth, uniform surfaces encourage easy and direct

movement, while narrow paths made of less comfortable materials, such as cobbles or crazy paving, tend to slow down the pace and encourage contemplation.

The material used and the way that the path is built should reflect the architecture of the house or the local landscape; sometimes a combination of the two, such as brick and flint, can be successful. If there is good, local stone available, perhaps both paving and paths can be made of the same material. A broad pathway of flagged stone can double as an edge to a border, allowing plants to flop on to it without the danger of being mown down.

The finished height of a path, when adjacent to a lawn, must always be *below* the level of the lawn so that the mower can ride over it. A



There is no doubt where this narrow brick path is leading but the journey will never be dull or boring.



The surface of patterned stones on this path is pleasing and imaginative but it is also labour-intensive.

combination of stone and brick, using flagstones to intersperse the brick panels, can help break up a monotonous pathway; it is worthwhile experimenting with a number of different patterns before making a final decision. Basket-weave bricks are ideal for a narrow path while a herringbone pattern has the advantage of encouraging directional flow along the path.

In many cases, stone or brick paths need to be set against a firm edge, such as brick laid flat or on edge, or Victorian 'rope tiles', which are gaining in popularity and work very well as a finish to paths adjacent to terraced houses. Stone or brick paths can quickly become very slippery when algae or moss begins to form, and although they can be scrubbed with something called

'Gården Jack', it may be safer to use gravel or pea shingle, available from builders' merchants in a variety of colours and sizes.

Again, a firm edge is necessary, treated timber usually being the most successful – by cutting this into short lengths, a gravel path can be made to curve and flow into the distance. The gravel should be no more than 2-3in (5-7cm) deep or it will be hard work walking on it. When rolled in, gravel can also give an attractive 'anti-slip' finish to an inexpensive concrete path. Gravel is a versatile material often used in Italian gardens to create patterns and borders as intricate as a carpet runner. This is a technique which requires planning, imagination and patience and it is a pity it is not seen more frequently.

Grass paths are effective, provided the surface stands up to the amount of traffic. Always use hardwearing grass seed mix and avoid using the path in wet weather. Save time and labour by making sure the grass path is the same width as your mower from the outset. On the other hand, wide mown paths look wonderful winding around trees in orchards or carving out walkways through long meadow grass sown with wild flowers.

Successful paths lead you almost subconsciously from one area to another. It may be quickly or slowly, allowing time to appreciate views and plants which release their scent as they brush your ankles or are crushed underfoot. A glimpse of a doorway or statue as one rounds a corner should encourage this voyage of discovery, whether the garden is large or small.

Revelations



QUADRAPODS

Franklin Faust's beautiful wooden quadrapods are a decorative and practical feature in Frank Cabot's garden at Stonecrop, in New York. They not only provide valuable height but are useful supports for sweet peas and other climbers. Franklin Faust's quadrapods cost US\$950, from Treillage Ltd, 418 East

75th Street, New York 10021. Tel 0101 212 535 2288.

British Garden Designer, George Carter, makes triangular wooden 'Obelisks' which are similar in style, costing £74 (inc VAT and UK delivery). He also makes 8 ft (2.5m), square wooden 'obelisks', costing £72.55. Both are supplied painted with a grey/blue stain (other colours and sizes made to order). For details contact George Carter, Silverstone Farm, North Elmham, Norfolk NR2 5EX. Tel 0362 668130.



HADSPEN SEAT

This seat, designed by Victorian architect Edwin Lutyens, creates a strong statement and provides a welcome destination at Hadspen. Andrew Crace has produced a version which he claims is more

comfortable than the original. His unpainted 'Lutyens' seat costs £1,250 plus VAT, (painting extra). Delivery two weeks from Andrew Crace Designs, 53 Bourne Lane, Much Hadham, Herts SG10 6ER. Tel 027984 2685.

VEGETABLES GALORE

The chef and gardener at Hunstrete Hotel will find all kinds of gourmet opportunities in the new *Vegetable Finder* (published by The Henry Doubleday Research Association, price £5.99). This vegetable equivalent to *The Plant Finder*, listing more than 3,000 vegetables, is the work of Jeremy Cherfas, head of Genetic Resources at the HDRA. It will help you track down many oriental vegetables and curiosities like *Tropaeolum tuberosum*, which was eaten like potatoes by the Incas. Each year, old vegetable varieties disappear from seed lists, but as we become more adventurous a few varieties, like the large-podded mange-tout pea, are becoming available from a wider range of sources.



BLUEBELL

EXTRAVAGANZA

The woodland at Fairhaven should be awash with bluebells by May but Fairhaven is not alone. Many National Trust properties around Britain also promise a brilliant



bluebell display. The voucher opposite allows admission for two people for the price of one to the following National Trust properties:

Blickling Hall, Blickling, Norwich, Norfolk. Tel 0263 733084.

A magnificent park and gardens with extensive plant centre open all year. Large drifts of bluebells in the wilderness garden and guided bluebell walks organised for May 16 and 19 at 2pm.

Ards House, Portadown, Co. Armagh, N. Ireland. Tel 0762 851236.

An interesting garden adjacent to a 17th-century farmhouse, renowned for spring bulbs, beautiful mixed borders, and a formal rose garden with varieties of Irish-raised cultivars. Recently planted 'Bluebell Hill'.

Trengwainton, nr Penzance, Cornwall. Tel 0736 63021.

Large shrub garden with spectacular views over Mount's Bay. Excellent collection of tender and half-hardy plants, including some, in the walled garden, that cannot be grown in the open elsewhere in England.

Emmetts Garden, Ide Hill, Sevenoaks, Kent. Tel 073275 367/429.

Five-acre garden planted towards the end of the 19th century in the style of William Robinson. Many exotic species within a natural landscape, underplanted with naturalised bulbs. Magnificent bluebell bank.

Killerton, Broadclyst, Exeter, Devon. Tel 0392 881345.

Large hillside laid out by Sir Thomas Acland and John Veitch in the late 18th century. Magnificent magnolias, rhododendrons and rare trees brought back to England by Victorian plant hunters like Kingdon-Ward.

The Vyne, Sherborne St John, Basingstoke, Hampshire. Tel 0256 881337.

Twelve-acre pleasure ground surrounding the 16th-century house. Ornamental lake and many fine trees. Guided two hour bluebell walk through the woods on Sunday April 25, 9.45am.

DOWN TO EARTH TOOL OFFER

This classic border fork and spade are both made from solid stainless steel. The handle and shaft, bearing a brass plaque with The Garden Studio name, are made from ash. These tools normally retail for £80 each but are offered in Gardens Illustrated at £65 each including carriage. (Price quoted for delivery in UK only).



A FEAST OF FRITILLARIES NEXT SPRING

Beth Chatto's feature on fritillaries encourages gardeners to experiment with these mysterious spring bulbs. Jacques Amand has put together three fritillary collections, offering a considerable saving on his catalogue prices. Bulbs will be sent out to readers in September, ready for planting.



COLLECTION A

100 bulbs of *Fritillaria meleagris*, our native snakes head fritillary, which come in shades of pink, deep plum and purple, plus 20 bulbs of *Fritillaria meleagris* 'Alba', a delicate white form. Ideal for naturalising in grass or woodland. Price: £12.95 (catalogue price £17.35).

COLLECTION B

A connoisseur's collection including one of each of the following: *Fritillaria imperialis* 'Lutea', the golden yellow crown imperial; *Fritillaria imperialis* 'Aurora', which is deep orange-red; *Fritillaria persica*, a deep purple native to Turkey, Iran and Israel; *Fritillaria acmopetala* which is green and maroon; *Fritillaria camschatensis*, almost black flowers appear in June; *Fritillaria pallidiflora*, a Chinese native with yellow bells; *Fritillaria verticillata*, cream and green flowers, also from China.

Price: £12.95 (catalogue price £16.25).

COLLECTION C

This collection consists of 3 bulbs of each variety offered in Collection B for £33.95 (catalogue price £41.29).

To order, send cheque made out to Jacques Amand Ltd, with coupon (right) indicating which of the Gardens Illustrated Fritillary Collections you require, or telephone your order, giving Access/Visa card number on 081 954 8138 (All prices quoted include p&P in UK only).



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Dovrat Ben-Nahum

Horticultural Horoscope

WRITTEN AND DEvised BY BRAY

The zodiac was originally devised as a gardeners' calendar by the first known agriculturalists in Mesopotamia. The zodiac's ancient origins have been combined with the astrological charts for APRIL and MAY, to give an insight into what to expect both inside and outside.

ARIES March 21–April 20

Good news. A period of frustration has come to an end. From April 27 you will be able to move forward, but keep a sense of perspective when it comes to planning projects in the garden. Try to be realistic about how much time you are prepared to lavish on your plot. Avoid conflict around April 10 – try to be a lamb not a battering ram.

TAURUS April 21–May 21

You have been working hard but without the results due to you. Perhaps you should have taken to the armchair with a good gardening book instead of being so ambitious? Spring will bring a change of pace. Use that energy to revitalise your garden soil with organic matter. Now is the time to start that compost heap.

GEMINI May 22–June 21

Your aspects for the next two months are good but reach a peak at the end of April. Geminis born around May 22 can expect a surprise near their birthday. Delays in financial matters are finally resolved, so you can afford to stock up with bedding plants or invest in specimen plants from your favourite nursery.

CANCER June 22–July 22

After a difficult winter, life takes on a much rosier aspect from late April. Now is a good time to consider a move to new pastures. Alternatively, work off your frustrations and anger about life's disappointments by re-turfing the lawn or re-seeding bare patches.

LEO July 23–August 23

Make the most of a burst of energy and re-design your garden. That sense of limitation has lifted at last. Buy the National Garden Scheme's *Yellow Book* and you will learn valuable lessons from people you meet at the gardens and nurseries you visit.

VIRGO August 24–September 22

Some Virgoans see gardening as an extension of tidying up. Your appreciation of nature is downright mystical. This

will help you achieve practical results that will bloom for years and produce colour schemes that are an inspiration.

LIBRA September 23–October 23

Bearing in mind you must sow in order to reap, this could be your best growing season for years. Most Librans enjoy working with others – The National Council for the Preservation of Plants and Gardens relies on people like you. In a nutshell, your enthusiasm can produce real results.

SCORPIO October 24–November 22

You will warm up with the spring. A more positive outlook brings impressive results. Investigate new ideas in recycling early this year. Loosen up and stick with it and you could find horticultural hobbies leading to a new profession.

SAGITTARIUS November 23–December 23

Alarming news. You are in danger of getting organised. Your fondness for exotic species and your hit and miss style of planting could give way to a more studied approach. Consider co-operative projects, like sharing an allotment.

CAPRICORN December 24–January 20

Difficult relationships may have taken their toll but this cycle of conflict is almost over. Those born around Jan 8 or after will still feel under pressure until late April. Use your self-discipline to avoid conflict around April 10. Don't be an old goat, take up a new challenge like growing exotic salads. Sorrel soup would have a particularly soothing effect on you.

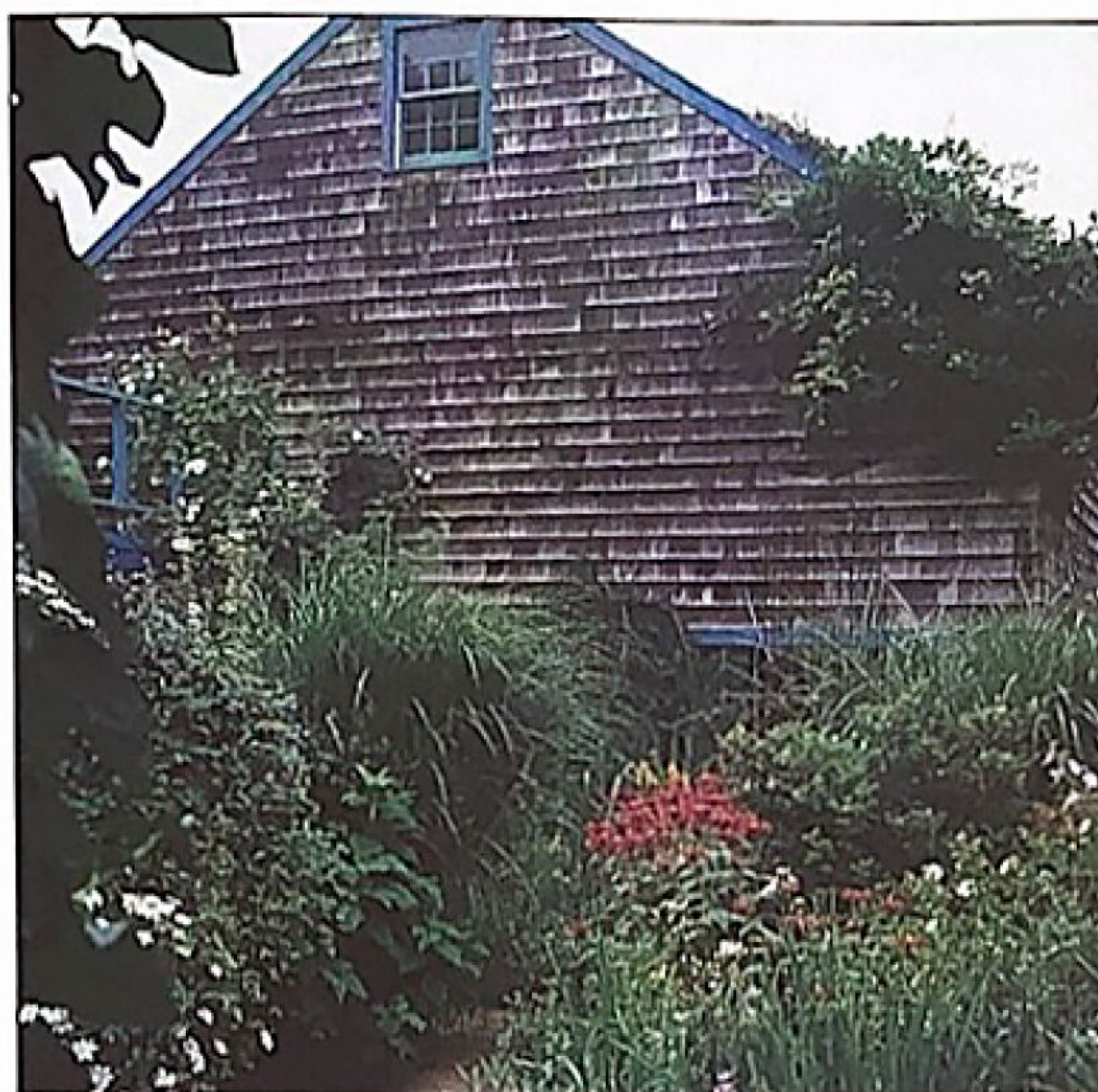
AQUARIUS January 21–February 18

Cheer up, Aquarians. You are not as old as you feel – it is time to expand your horticultural horizons. What about a tour of foreign gardens? You have always wanted to see those American redwoods, *Sequoia gigantea*, or make a bee-line for the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.

PISCES February 19–March 20

Enough self-sacrifice, now is the time to spend your way to happiness. Splash out on those stainless steel tools you have been yearning for. You have a sure and graceful touch in the garden, appreciating quantity as well as quality. Those Pisces usually noted for personal energy conservation will work hard and enjoy it.

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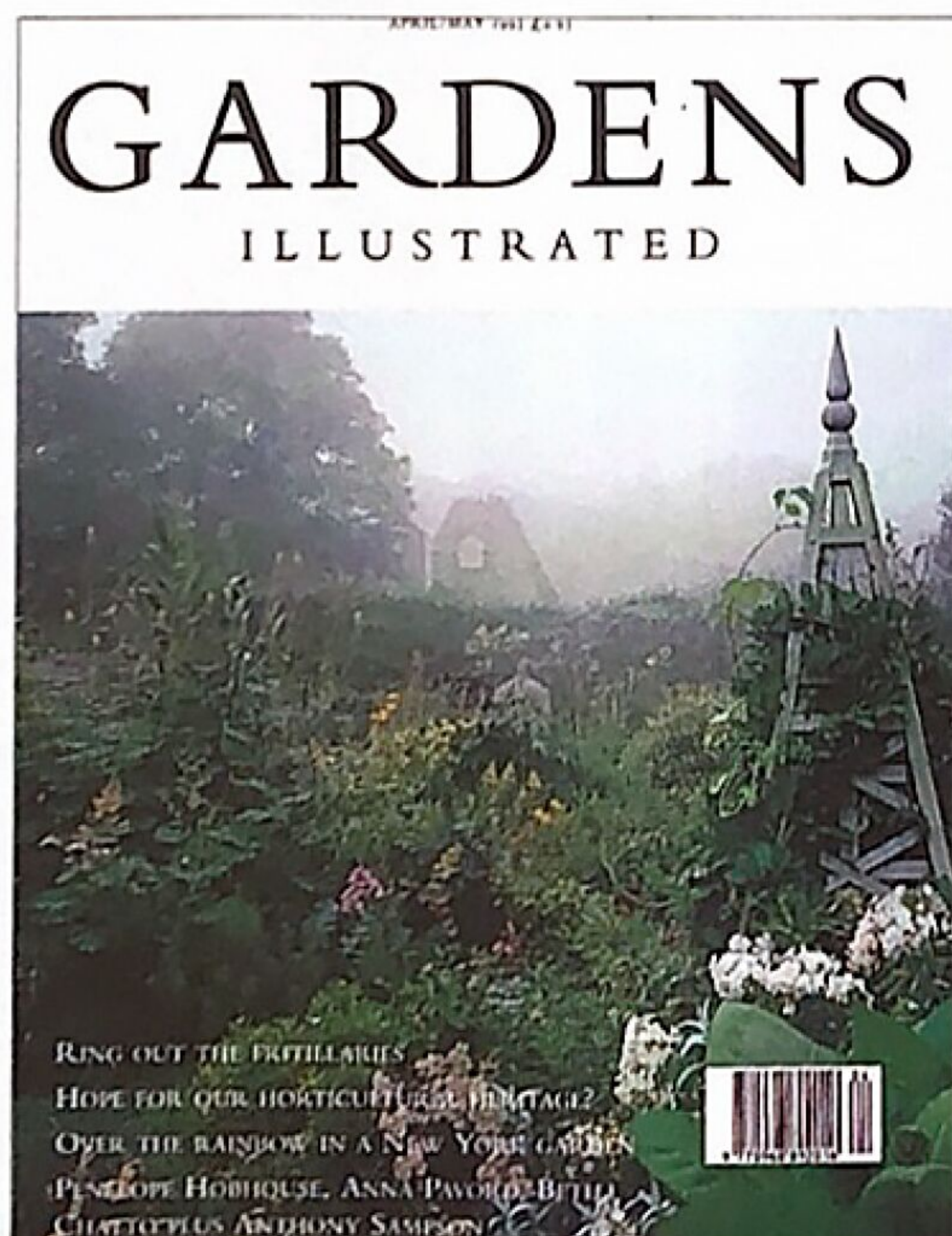
CUTTING A DASH – ROSEMARY VEREY IN CONNECTICUT

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FRITILLARIES

PAGE 76

OUT OF PRINT BOOKS :
Dwarf Bulbs by Brian Mathew, publ Batsford, around £15.00 from Mike Park Books, 351 Sutton Common Road, Sutton, Surrey SM39 9HZ.
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Fritillaries by Christabel Beck, long out of print; copies fetch between £65 and £75 says Mike Park. Other dealers in gardening books include: Anna Buxton, Redcroft, 23 Murrayfield Road, Edinburgh EH12 6EP, tel 031 337 1747; and D & E Lloyd, 9 Mortlake Terrace, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3DT.
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MAKERS

PAGE 96

Philip Thomason, The Old Vicarage, Cudworth, Ilminster, Somerset. Callers by appointment only.
Boy and Girl fountain available from Architectural Heritage, Taddington Manor, Taddington, nr Cutsdean, Cheltenham,

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ARTIST IN THE ALLOTMENT

PAGE 102

The 'Maria Hofker' rose will be available next autumn from Interplant Roses, Broekweg 3, 3956, nr Leersum, Holland.
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PATHS TO YOUR DESIRES

PAGE 120

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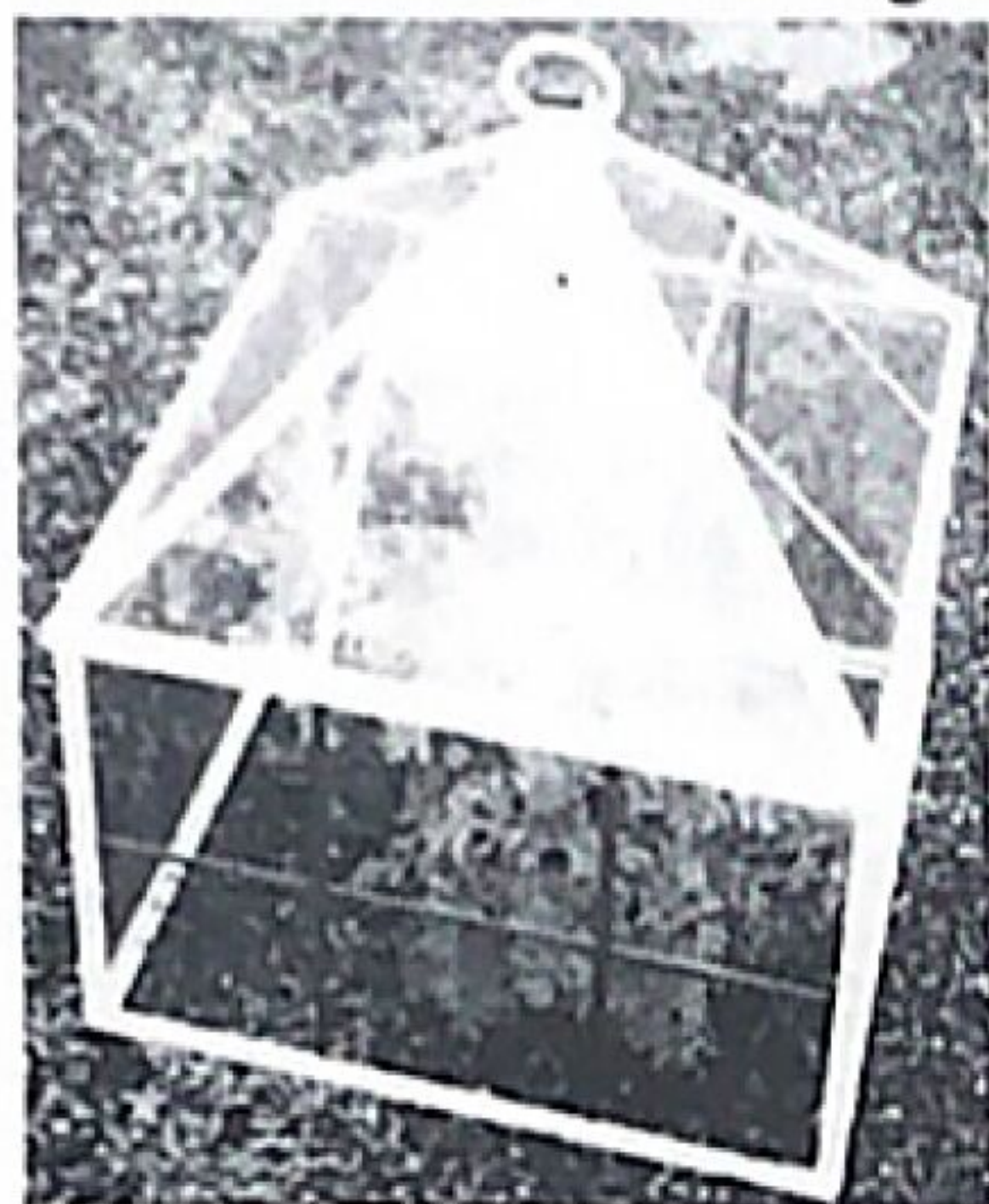
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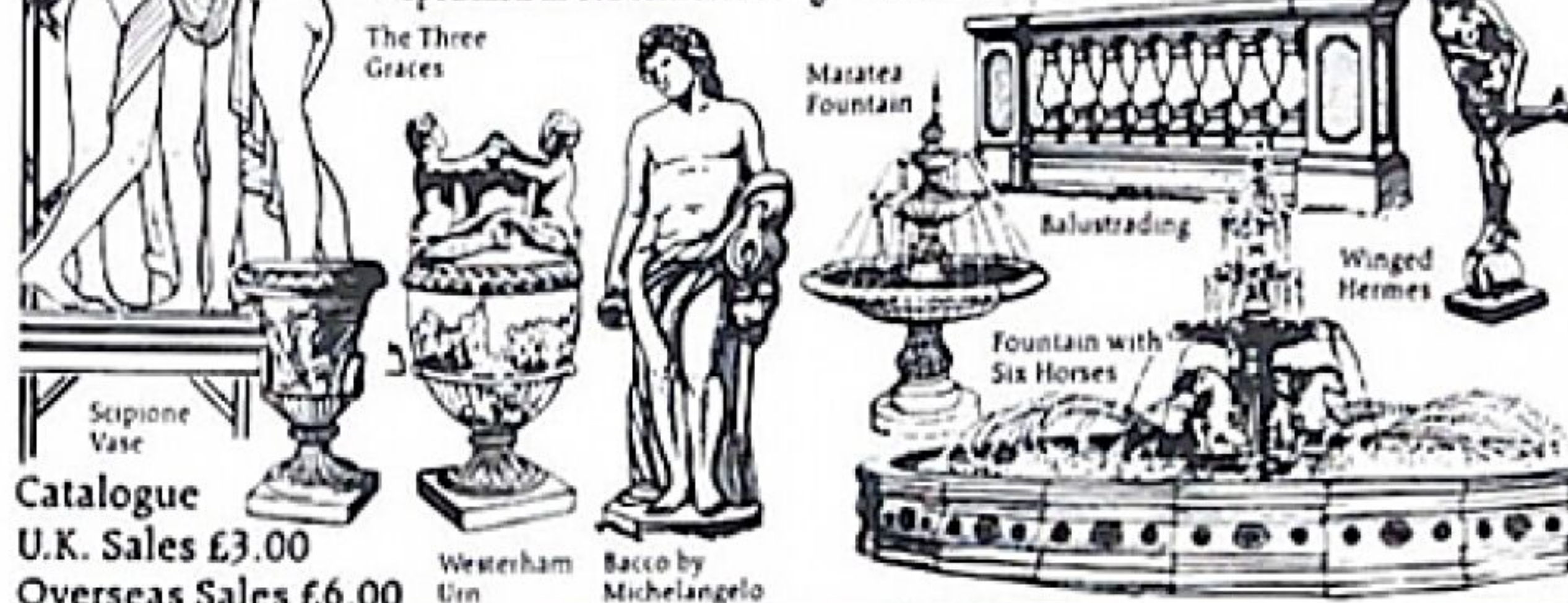
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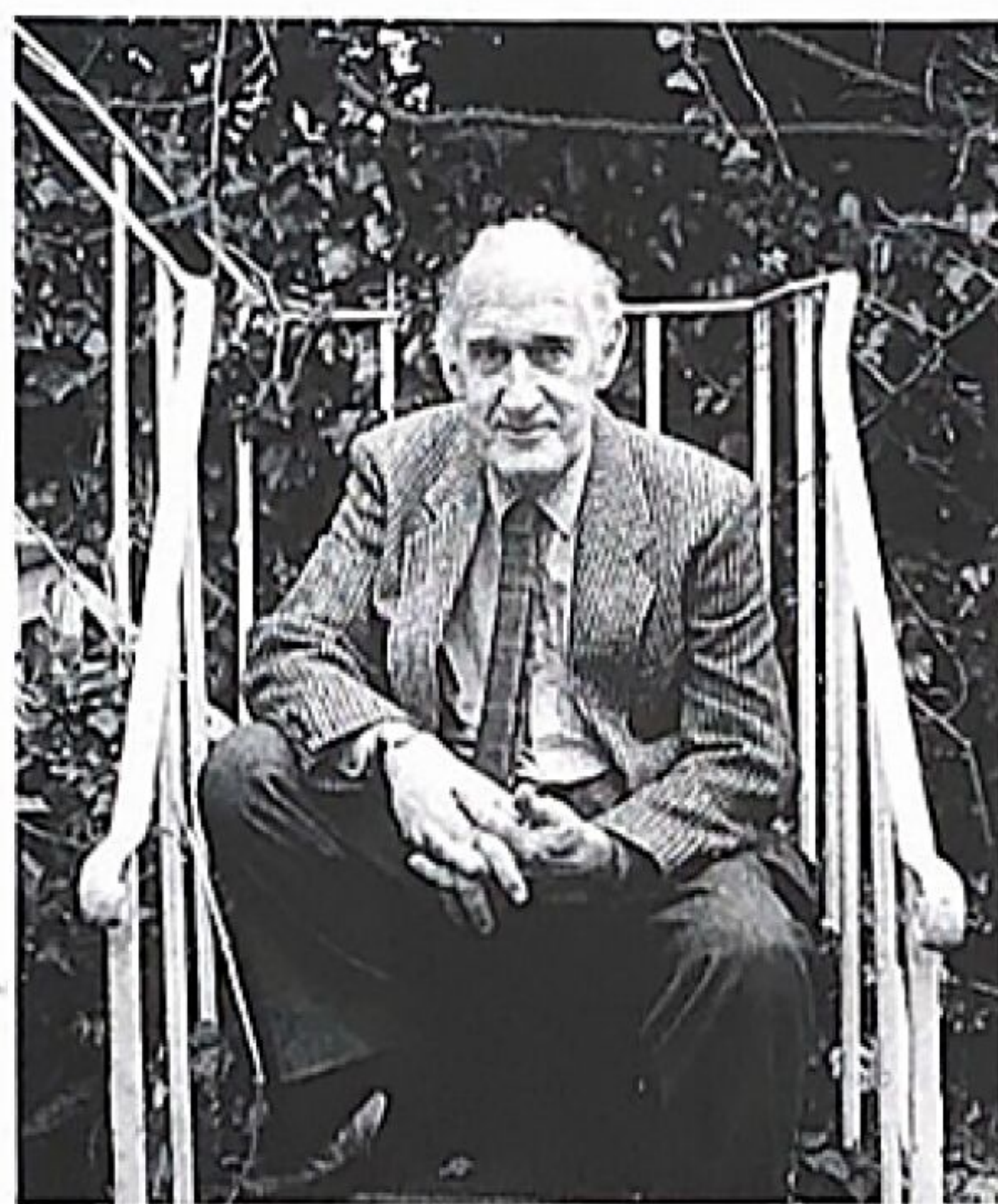
It's imagination that is the problem with planting climbing roses. How can anyone imagine those small, dead-looking roots, which arrive by post on a bleak winter's morning, turning into cascading and rampaging giants, overwhelming pergolas and threatening to pull them down?

Climbers are my particular obsession and generate the most indecision. Twenty years ago they were so much easier to choose. There was a handful of corny favourites like 'Albertine', 'Mermaid' or 'Paul's Scarlet Climber' which could be seen in any suburban street.

Now the names multiply every year, drawn from all over the world: 'Albertine', the invention of the great Frenchman Barbier, turns out to have far more interesting relations, like 'François Juranville' and 'Alexandre Girault'. The German rose-grower Paul produced more exotic wonders, reaching a peak with 'Paul's Himalayan Musk'. The British have discovered treasures in their own countryside, like 'Blush Rambler' or 'Surpassing Beauty of Wolvercote'.

Today the specialist rose-growers in England, like Beale or Austin, offer hundreds of cultivars. You need a computer to avoid a fearful clash of colour or style: a brash 'American Pillar' next to an oversensitive 'Pompon de Paris', or a variegated 'Seven Sisters', as subtle as a water-colour, next to an 'Excelsa' as obvious as poster-paint.

As climbing roses grow older with their ageing owner, they provide their own grim metaphors: advancing years, dead wood, dwindling sap, branches in



need of drastic pruning. But they can still invade the house and terrorise the occupier; even hardy old gardeners talk of 'Kiftgate' or 'Wedding Day' as if they were Frankenstein's monster, impossible to keep out.

When I bought an old house thirty years ago I was delighted to hack back an ancient rose which had completely blocked the garden door: now the wilderness has all grown up again, and I can't bring myself to cut it back. And there's still a tactful taboo in gardening books about mentioning the death of roses. Why do climbers have such an obsessive hold over their owners? Of course vertical gardening has many purely practical advantages over the horizontal kind: you don't need to stoop, dig or weed. You need only mulch and tend a single stem which can provide a thousand blooms – a bargain of productivity – and then snip and intertwine the branches without ever bending over.

Some sceptics claim that these roses

simply provide a surrogate for personal ambition and social climbing; and certainly there are gardeners who seem to identify with 'Climbing Lady Sylvia' or 'Climbing Lady Hillingdon', while others insist on having only roses with French titles, refusing to be seen with a mere 'Mrs Harkness'. Certainly climbers give gardeners the greatest scope for sheer competitiveness, allowing them to measure their achievement in metres.

You start to believe in myths like Jack and the Beanstalk. For the stems are constantly stretching out towards the sun, and striving for the sky. Massive climbers like the great rose at Kiftgate have legendary splendours which have long outgrown their planters.

As the dried-up little plant which came through the post suddenly starts sprouting and clambers up a pole or tree, it produces a more magical effect than any conjuring trick or firework. It makes patterns which outdo anything you can find on a William Morris wallpaper or an Iznik plate. It creates wild shapes and flourishes which exceed any of the fantasies of Gothic or Islamic architects, with their ogees, arabesques, arches, columns or fan vaulting.

It makes the descriptions in the catalogue – rampant, prolific, lax or leggy – seem hopelessly prosaic. And it finally proves that no amount of imagination in the midst of winter can anticipate the outrageous exuberance and excesses of a climber when it begins its ascent in spring.

Anthony Sampson's most recent book, 'The Essential Anatomy of Britain' is published by Hodder & Stoughton, £9.99.

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